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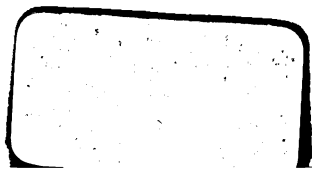

THE MYSTERIES OF PARIS.

BY

M. EUGÈNE SUE.

THE

MYSTERIES OF PARIS;

FROM THE FRENCH

OF

M. EUGÈNE SUE.

BY

J. D. SMITH, ESQ.

ILLUSTRATED WITH

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THE MYSTERIES OF PARIS.

PART IV. CONTINUED.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEBT.

Morel had often been present at similar scenes, quite as sad as those we have related; yet he cried, in a fit of despair, throwing his whip on the table,

"Oh, what a life! what a life!"

"Is it my fault, mine, if my mother is an idiot?" said Madeleine, weeping. "Is it mine?" asked Morel. "What do I ask? To kill myself with work for you all;" day and night am I to work. I do not complain, as long as I have strength, I will go on; but I cannot work at my trade, and be at the same time nurse for the crazy, the sick, and the children! No; Heaven is not just; no, it is not just! It is too much for a single man," said the jeweller in a heart-rending tone; and, quite overcome, he fell on his stool, his face concealed in his hands. "Since they would not take my mother into the hospital, because she was not mad enough, what do you wish me to do, me—there? When you torment yourself with what you cannot help, what good does it do?" "None," said the artisan, and he wiped a tear from his eye —"none, you are right; but when everything overwhelms, one is sometimes no longer one's own master." "Oh! my God! I am so thirsty, I shiver, yet the fever burns me," said Madeleine. "Wait, I will give you some drink."

Morel went to get the jug under the roof. After having, with some difficulty, broken the ice which covered the water, he filled a cup with this frozen liquid and approached the bed of his wife, who eagerly stretched out her impatient hands. But after a moment's reflection he said to her, "No, this is too cold while the fever is on; it will do you harm." "It will do me harm? so much the better; give me quickly' then," answered Madeleine, bitterly, "it will be so much the sooner finished;

it will disembarrass you of me. You will then only have to take care of the idiot and the children. The sick will be wanting one less." "Why do you speak so to me, Madeleine? I do not deserve it," said Morel, sadly. "Stop, do not grieve me, for I have only just strength enough left to work. My head is not very strong; it cannot stand it; and then what will become of you and your children? it is for you and them I speak; if it only concerned myself, to-morrow would settle all my troubles. Thank God, the river flows for every one!" "Poor Morel!" said Madeleine, weeping; "it is true, I was wrong to say what I did. Never mind; my intention was good; yes, for, in short, I am useless to you and our children; for sixteen months I have been confined to my bed. Oh, my God! I am so thirsty; I beg you, give me to drink!" "Directly, I am trying to warm it in my hands." "How kind you are; and yet I could say such harsh things to you!"

"Poor woman, you suffer, and that quickens the temper; say anything you please to me, but don't say you wish to leave me." "But for what good am I? What use is our children to us? To overwhelm you with work."

"Doubtless! thus, thanks to you all, I find strength enough to labour sometimes twenty hours a day; even to becoming crooked and deformed. Do you believe that, except on this account I would, for the love of myself alone, perform my work? Oh, no, life has not charms enough for me, I'd soon put a finish to it."

"Just so I think," answered Madeleine; "except for the children, I should have said to you long since, Morel, you have had enough, so have I; light a pan of charcoal; we will laugh at poverty. But these children!" "You see they are good for something," said Morel, with admirable naïveté. "Come, drink but a small drop at a time, for it is still cold." "Oh! thank you, Morel," said Madeleine, drinking with avidity. "Enough, enough. It is too cold; my ague increases, said Madeleine, returning the cup. "Oh God! I told you so; you suffer." "I have no longer the strength to tremble. It seems to me I am surrounded on all sides with ice." Morel took off his waistcoat, put it on the feet of his wife, and remained with his shoulders naked. The unfortunate man had no shirt. "But you will freeze, Morel!" "If I am too cold I will put on my waistcoat directly." "Poor man! ah, you are right: Heaven is not just. What have

we done that we should be so wretched? while others—" "All have their troubles, the great as well as the small." "Yes, but the great have troubles that do not empty their stomachs, and which do not make them tremble with cold." "Hold, when I think that with the price of one of those diamonds we could have what would allow us to live comfortably, it is revolting; and what good do they do? If we only said, what good do they do to others, you must go a good way. It is as if you said, what good does it do the gentleman, whom Madame Pipelet calls the commandant, to have hired and furnished the first story of this house, when he never comes? What good does it do him to have those good mattresses and blankets, since he lodges elsewhere?" "It is true, there is enough there for poor people like us to live on for a long time; without reckoning that Madame Pipelet makes a fire there every day to prevent the furniture from being injured by the damp. So much good heat lost; while we, and our children, freeze. But, you will say to me, we are not furniture. Oh, these rich! it is too hard!"

"No harder than others, Madeleine. But they don't know, do you see, what misery is. They are born happy, live happy, die happy: why should they think of us? and besides, I tell you they don't know. How can they have an idea of the privations of others? Are they very hungry? great is their joy, they can only dine the better. Is it very cold? so much the better, they call it a fine frost; it is very plain: if they walk out, they return to the corner of a fine fireside, and the cold makes them find the fire comfortable; they cannot, then, pity us much, since to them hunger and cold contribute to their pleasure. They don't know, do you see, they don't know! We, in their places, would act as they do." "Poor people are, then, better than them all, since they keep one another. This good little Mademoiselle Rigolette, who has so often watched over me and the children, took Jerome and Pierre with her last night to partake of her supper. And her supper is only a cup of milk and some bread. At her age one has a good appetite; she must have deprived herself."

"Poor girl! yes, she is very kind. And why? because she knows what sorrow is. And as I say always, If the rich only knew!—if they knew!" "And this little lady who came to us yesterday with such an alarmed look, to ask us if we needed

anything; now, she knows what it is to be unfortunate—well! why don't she return?" "She will return, perhaps; for she had a charitable and sweet expression." "Oh, with you, if one is only rich, they are always right. One would say that the rich were made of another kind of clay than the poor."

"I do not say that," answered Morel, gently. "I say, on the contrary, they have their defects: we have ours. The misery is, they don't know. The evil is, again, that there are many agents to discover the beggars who have committed crimes, and that there are none to seek out the honest workman and his family, sinking under the weight of poverty, and who, for want of a little timely assistance, sometimes are led into temptation. It is right to punish evil; but perhaps it would be better to prevent it. You may remain honest until you are fifty; but extreme want and poverty may cause you to do wrong, and here is one rogue the more; while that if one had known—but why think of this? The world is just as it is. I am poor and desperate—I speak thus. Were I rich I would talk of fêtes and pleasures. Well, poor wife! how do you feel now?" "Just the same—my legs are lifeless. But you are shivering; take your waistcoat, and blow out the candle, it is daylight." In fact, a dim light, glancing with difficulty through the snow which covered the window, began to display the interior of this wretched dwelling-place, and rendered its aspect still more frightful. The shades of night had concealed at least a part of its horrors.

"I am going to wait until it is light enough for me to recommence my work," said the artisan, seating himself on the edge of the straw-bed, and leaning his face on his hands. After a few moments' silence, Madeleine said to him, "When will Madame Mathieu come to get the stones you are now working on?" "This morning. I have only the face of one of the false diamonds to polish." A false diamond! you who only cut precious stones, notwithstanding what they believe in the house!" "How? you don't know?"—ah, true, when Madame Mathieu came the other day you were asleep. She gave me ten false diamonds, ten Rhine flint stones to cut, just the same size, of the fine stones she brought: those which are there with the rubies. I have never seen diamonds of a finer water; those ten stones are worth at least sixty thousand francs." "And why does she wish you to imitate them with the false stones?" "A great lady, to whom

they belong—a duchess, I believe—has ordered Mr. Baudoin the jeweller to sell her set, and to have a false one made to replace it. Madame Mathieu, the broker of Mr. Baudoin, told me this when she brought me the work, so that I could imitate them exactly. Madame Mathieu has given the same orders to four other workmen, for there are forty or fifty pieces to cut. I could not do them all; they must be all ready this morning, to give Mr. Baudoin time to see them. Madame Mathieu said that the great ladies often in secret, had their diamonds replaced by false ones."

"You see, then, that false stones produce the same effect as the true ones, and that the great ladies who wear these only for ornament, would never have the idea to sacrifice a diamond to succour such as we are." "Poor wife! be reasonable; sorrow makes you unjust; who is it that knows that we are unhappy?" "Oh! what a man! If they were to cut you into pieces you would say, I thank you." Morel shrugged his shoulders with emotion. "How much does Madame Mathieu owe you this morning?" asked Madeleine. "Nothing; since I am in advance already one hundred and twenty francs."

"Nothing, and we finished yesterday our last twenty sous!" "Yes," said Morel in a mournful tone. "And what are we going to do?" "I don't know." "And the baker will not give us any more credit." "No: and yesterday I borrowed half a loaf from Madame Pipelet."

"Will Mother Burette lend us anything?" "Lend us! Now that she has all our things in pawn, on what will she lend us?" on our children?" said Morel with a bitter smile. "But my mother, the children, and you, you have only eaten a pound and a half of bread among the whole of you, yesterday. You must not die of hunger; and it is your fault: you would not be enrolled this year at the alms-house."

"Those only are enrolled who have furniture, and we have none. We are looked upon as boarders."

"But what shall we do, then?" "Perhaps this little lady, who came yesterday, will not forget!"

"Yes; reckon on it: but Madame Mathieu will lend you five francs. You have worked for her ten years, she cannot leave in such a situation an honest workman, with such a family." I do not think she will be able to lend us anything. She has done all she could to advance me, little by little, this hundred and twenty francs. It is a large sum for her. Because she is a broker in

diamonds, and although she has sometimes fifty thousand francs worth in her box, she is no richer for it. When she earns a hundred francs a month, she is well satisfied, for she has her expenses also—two nieces to bring up. Fives francs for her, do you see, is like five francs for us; and there are times when one hasn't them—you well know it. Being already much in advance with me, she can hardly take the bread out of her own mouth."

"Now you see what it is to work, for a broker, instead of working for the rich jewellers; they are less exacting sometimes; but you will always let yourself be eaten with the wool upon your back. But it is your fault."

"My fault!" cried the unhappy man, exasperated by this absurd reproach; "is it your mother or not who is the cause of all our misery? If I had not been obliged to pay for the diamond she lost, we should be in advance; we should have had the value of my labour; we should have the eleven hundred francs that we drew out of the saving's bank to add to the thirteen hundred that Jacques Ferrand lent us, whom God curse!" "You won't ask anything from him. After all, he is a miser; but that's nothing; you can but try."

"Ask him!" cried Morel; "I'd prefer to roast before a slow fire. Hold! don't speak of that man, you'll drive me mad." Saying these words, the countenance of the artisan, ordinarily sweet and resigned, assumed an energetic expression; his pale face became slightly coloured, he arose quickly from the bed where he was seated and walked the garret in great agitation. Notwithstanding his frail, deformed figure, the attitude, the features of this man expressed profound indignation. "I am not wicked," cried he, "In my life I have never harmed any one; but look here, this notary! (The reader will recollect that Fleur de Marie had, when a child, been confided to the care of this notary, and that his housekeeper had abandoned the child to La Chouette, who agreed to take her for the sum of one thousand francs.) Oh! I wish him as much harm as he has caused me." Then, putting his hands on his head, he murmured, in a sorrowing tone, "My God! why, then, does an unhappy lot, which I have not merited, deliver me and mine, hands and feet tied, to this hypocrite?"

"That's it," said Madeleine—"set yourself against him; you will be well rewarded when he has put you in prison, as he can

do for this note of thirteen hundred francs, for which he has a judgment against you these three months; he has you like a bird at the end of a string; I also detest this notary; but since we are in his power, we must—" "Let him dishonour our daughter—is it not?" cried the artisan in a voice of thunder. "Good God! be quiet then, these children are awake: they hear you." "Bah! so much the better, it will be a good example for our two little girls; it will prepare them; some day he may have the notion; are we not in his power? as you say; come, say, again he can put me in prison; come, speak frankly, we must abandon our child to him, is it not so?"

Then bursting into tears, he cried, "Oh! my children, my poor children, my Louise! my good and pretty Louise! too handsome—it is from this that all our misfortunes come; if she had never been so handsome, this man would not have proposed to lend me this money. I am industrious and honest; the jeweller would have given me time; I should have been under no obligation to the monster, and he could not have abused the service he has rendered us, to try to dishonour my daughter; I would not have left her a day with him—but it must be so—he has me in his power. Oh! poverty, how many outrages you compel one to swallow!" "But what could we do? He told Louise, 'If you leave my house, I will send your father to prison.' Yes, he speaks to her as if she was the vilest of creation." "If it was only that, it would be enough; but if she leaves him, he will send you to prison, and then what will become of us?" "If Louise earned twenty francs a month in another place, could we live upon that alone?" "Yes, it is to live that we let him, perhaps, dishonour Louise." "You always exaggerate; the notary pursues her, it is true; but she is virtuous, you know it well."

"Oh! yes, she is virtuous, and active, and good! When this diamond was lost, and that, seeing us in trouble, she wished to go to service to lessen our expenses, did I not tell you how much it would cost me? She a servant, ill treated, humiliated, she—naturally so proud, that in joking—do you remember it? we joked then, we called her the princess, because she said often that with neatness she would make our dwelling like a little palace." "Dear child! it would have been my pride to have kept her with us, even if I had worked all night. It is that also, when I saw her sweet face and her pretty black eyes before me, near

my workbench, and I heard her sing, my task appeared less heavy. Poor Louise; so industrious, and withal so gay. Even to your mother, who would do just as she wished—and you, what care she took of you; how she amused you; she found time to do everything; thus with Louise, all our happiness is gone." "Stop, Morel, do not recall this to my mind, you break my heart," said Madeleine, weeping bitter tears. "Oh! when I think that perhaps this old monster—Hold, do you see, at this thought my brain turns? I feel that I must go and kill him, and then myself afterward." "And us, what will become of us? And besides, once more you exaggerate; the notary may have said this to Louise as a joke; besides, he goes to mass every Sunday; he visits many friends; there are many persons who say it is safer to place money with him than in the Savings' Bank."

"What does that prove? that he is rich, and a hypocrite. I know Louise well; she is virtuous. Yes; but she loves us as one seldom loves; her heart bleeds at our misery; she knows that without me you would all die of hunger; and if the notary has threatened to put me in prison, the poor creature may have been capable; oh, my head; I shall become mad. * * * "Well; and why do you fear that?" "I fear, because I have remarked that for three months, every time that Louise comes here, and she embraces me she blushes." "With pleasure at seeing you." "Or with shame; she becomes every day more sad." "Because she sees us every day more wretched; and, besides, when I speak to her of the notary, she says that he no longer threatens her with the prison for you. * * * * "And when one thinks," she continued, "that with one of the diamonds which are there on your bench, you could reimburse the notary, take our daughter away from him, and keep her at home." "When you have said this to me a hundred times, what good does it do? Certainly, if I were rich, I should not be poor," answered Morel, rather impatiently.

Probity was so natural, and, thus to say, so organic in this man, that he did not imagine that his wife, worn out, exhausted by misfortune, could entertain an idea of tempting his honesty. He continued, bitterly, "We must be resigned. Happy those, who can have their children around them, to protect them from evil; but a daughter of the poor, who can watch her? No one. Is she old enough to earn any thing?—She goes to her work in

the morning, returns at night; during this time the mother attends to her work, the father to his. Time is our fortune, and bread is so dear, that we have not the leisure to watch over the conduct of our children; and yet the world cries out at the misconduct of poor girls, as if their parents had the means to keep them at home, or the time to watch over them when they are abroad. The privations we suffer are nothing in comparison to our sorrow in leaving our wife, children, and parents. It is, above all, to us that a family life would be salutary and consoling. Yet, as soon as our children are old enough, we are obliged to part with them."

At this moment, some one knocked loudly at the door of the garret.

CHAPTER VII.

THE JUDGMENT.

Much astonished, the artisan went and opened it. Two men entered into the garret. The one, tall and thin, with a pimpled face, surrrounded by thick black and grey whiskers, held in his hand a large leaded cane, wore a hat out of shape, a long, dirty, green surtout, closely buttoned. From its rusty collar of black velvet stuck out a long red neck, scaled like that of a vulture. This man was called Malicorne.

The other, much smaller, but of equally low appearance, red-haired, stout and short, was dressed in a ridiculous kind of finery. Diamond buttons confined the bosom of his shirt, and a long chain of gold was suspended over a waistcoat of some faded Scotch stuff; over all he wore a coat of a yellowish grey. This man was called Bourdin.

"Oh, it smells of poverty and death, here," said Malicorne, stopping at the door. "The truth is, it don't smell of musk. What devices!" answered Bourdin, with a gesture of disgust and contempt; then he advanced towards the artisan, who regarded him with as much surprise as indignation. Through the half-opened door could be seen the cunning, wicked face of Tortillard, who, having followed these unknown, looked, spied, listened. "What do you want?" asked the artisan. "Jerome Morel," answered Bourdin. "I am he." "Journeyman jeweller?" "I am he." "Very sure?" "Once more, I am he.

You make me angry. What do you want? Explain, or go out." "That's polite; thank you. I say, Malicorne, there's no *fat* here; it 's not as it is at the viscount de St. Remy—" "Hold!" said Morel, with indignation; "if you were not drunk, as you appear to be, I should be angry. Leave my room this moment!" "Ah, ah; aint he droll, *the ram's horn,*" cried Bourdin, making an insulting allusion to the deformed figure of the artisan. "I say, Malicorne, he has the impudence to call this his *room*—a hole where I would not put my dog!" "My God!" cried Madeleine, so much alarmed, that, until then, she had not uttered a word. "Call for help; perhaps they are robbers—take care of your diamonds."

Seeing these two unknown approaching nearer and nearer to his work-bench, Morel feared some evil design, ran to the table, and with his hands covered the precious stones. Tortillard, still on the watch, heard the words of Madeleine, remarked the movement of the artisan, and said to himself, "Ah, ah; they called him a workman in false stones; if they were false, he would not fear their being stolen. Just as well to know; then Mother Mathieu, who comes here so often, is also, then, a broker in real stones. Just as well to know; I'll tell that to La Chouette," said the son of Bras-Rouge.

"If you do not leave my room, I'll call the guard," said Morel. The children, frightened at this scene, began to weep, and the old idiot rose up in bed. "If any one has a right to call the guard, it is us; do you hear, sir?" said Bourdin. "As the guard must assist us to conduct you, if you kick," added Malicorne; "we have not a justice of the peace with us, it is true; but if you insist upon his society, we will serve him up, fresh from his bed, piping hot. Bourdin, go and fetch him." "In prison! I?" cried Morel, in a stupor. "Yes; to Clichy." "To Clichy?" repeated the artisan, with a haggard air. "Ain't he dull of comprehension?" said Malicorne, "To prison, for debt; do you like that better?" added Bourdin. "You—you—are—how—the notary. Ah! my God!" and the workman, pale as death, fell back on his bench, unable to utter a word.

"We are officers; do you understand?" "Morel! the note of the master of Louise, we are lost!" cried Madeleine in a piercing tone. "Here is the judgment," said Malicorne, drawing from his portfolio a stamped act.

After having sung through his nose a part of the deed, in a voice almost unintelligible, he articulated clearly the last words, unfortunately, too significant for the artisan:

"Judgment in last resort. The tribunal condemns Jerome Morel to pay Jacques Ferrand, by all lawful means, and even by his body, the sum of thirteen hundred francs, with interest from the date of protest; also to pay the costs.

"Ordered and judged at Paris this 13th of September, 1838."

"And Louise, then—and Louise!" cried Morel, almost wild; where is she? Has she left the notary, since he wishes to imprison me? Louise; my God! what has become of her?" "Who is Louise?" said Bourdin.

"Leave him, then," continued Malicorne, brutally; "don't you see he is fooling you? Come!" and he drew near to Morel; "come; to the left, march; forward, march; I want some fresh air; it is poisonous here." "Morel, don't go. Defend yourself," cried Madeleine, wildly. "Kill the scoundrels. Oh! you are a coward; you will let them take you away; you will abandon us." "Do as if you were at home, madame," said Bourdin, in a sardonic manner; "but if your man raises his hand to me, I'll knock him down." Solely absorbed about Louise, Morel heard nothing that was said around him. Suddenly, an expression of bitter joy illumined his face; he cried, "Louise has left the house of the notary; I will go to prison, cheerfully." But casting a look around him, he said, "And my wife—and her mother—and my other children—who will feed them? They will not give me jewels to work in prison; they will think my misconduct has sent me there. It is, then, our death—the death of all of us—that the notary desires." "Once; twice; shall we finish?" said Bourdin; "we are tired; finally, dress yourself, and march." "My good gentlemen, pardon what I said just now," cried Madeleine. "You will not have the heart to take away Morel. What do you think will become of me and my five children, and my mother, who is crazy? There; do you see her there? she is crazy, my good gentlemen; she is crazy."

"The old woman with the shaved head? Hold! she is shaved," said Malicorne; I thought she had a white skull cap." "My children, throw yourselves at the feet of these good gentlemen," cried Madeline, wishing, by a last effort, to soften the

officers; "pray them not to take away your father, our sole support."

Notwithstanding the order of their mother, the children wept, not daring to leave their resting-place. At this unaccustomed noise, at the sight of the men she did not know, the idiot began to howl, pressing against the wall.

"Ah, now; thunder! when will this finish?" cried Malicorne. "Do you think we are feasting here? Come, march, or I'll make you." He placed his hand on the shoulder of the artisan, and shook him roughly. This menace, this gesture, inspired great terror among the children; the three little boys got out of their straw bed, half naked, and came, weeping, to cast themselves at the feet of the officers, clasping their hands, and crying, in a heart-rending tone, "Pardon, don't kill our father." At the sight of three unfortunate children, shivering with cold and fright, Bourdin, notwithstanding his natural hardness of heart, felt himself touched. His comrade, unfeeling, brutally disengaged his leg from the embraces of the children, saying, "Eh; get out, you brats; what a dog's trade, if we had always to do with such beggars!"

A horrible episode renders this scene still more frightful. The eldest of the little girls, who had remained in the straw-bed with her sick sister, suddenly cried out, "Mamma, I don't know what's the matter with her: Adèle: she is all cold. She looks at me, but she don't breathe."

The poor sick child had just expired without a groan, her eyes still fixed on her sister, whom she loved tenderly. It is impossible to describe the cry that was uttered by the wife of the artisan at this revelation, for she comprehended all. It was one of those convulsive, heaving cries, torn from the very bowels of a mother. "My sister looks as if she was dead; my God! I am afraid," cried the child, rushing out of the bed, and running to throw herself into the arms of her mother. She forgetting that her almost paralized limbs could not sustain her, made a violent effort to get up, and go to her dead child; but her strength failed her, and she fell, on the floor, uttering a last cry of despair This found an echo in the heart of Morel; he aroused himself from his stupor: with a bound he was at the bedside, and caught up his child.

He found her dead!

Cold and hunger had hastened her end, although her complaint, the fruit of misery, was mortal. Her poor little limbs were already stiff and frozen.

CHAPTER VIII.

LOUISE.

MOREL, with his grey hair erect from despair and fright, remained immovable, holding his dead child in his arms. He regarded her with a dry eye, fixed and red. "Morel, give me my Adèle;" cried the unhappy mother, stretching out her arms towards her husband. "It is not true; no; she is not dead, you will see. I am going to warm her." The curiosity of the idiot was excited by the endeavours of the officers to get hold of the artisan, who would not be separated from the body of his child. The old woman ceased to howl, arose from her couch, drew near softly, thrust her hideous head over the shoulder of Morel, and for some moments looked at the corpse of her grandchild.

Her features preserved their habitual expression of stupidity; at the end of a moment, she uttered a sort of deep, unearthly howl, like that of a famished beast; then, returning to her bed she threw herself on it, crying, "Hunger; hunger;" "You see, gentlemen, a poor little girl of four years, Adèle. She is called Adèle. I kissed her last night and this morning; and now see her! Perhaps you will say it is one mouth less to feed, and that I am fortunate; is it not so?" said the artisan, with a haggard look; his reason began to be shaken under so many shocks.

"Morel, I want my child; I want her: "cried Madeleine.

"It is true; each in turn," answered the artisan; and he placed the child in the arms of its mother. She not less wandering than her husband, concealed in the straw of her bed, the body of her child hiding it from all eyes with a kind of savage jealousy; while the other children, kneeling, burst into sobs.

The officers, for a moment overcome by the scene, soon recovered their brutality of manner. "Ah, now; come, comrade," said Malicorne; "your child is dead; it is a misfortune; we are all mortal; we can do nothing, neither can you. You must follow us; we have yet another individual to catch, for game abounds to-day."

Morel did not hear this man. Completely lost in thought, he said "We must, however, put my little child in a shroud; watch her

here, until they come to take her away. A shroud: but how? we have nothing. And the coffin! who will trust? Oh, a coffin so small: a child only four years old, it ought not to be dear; and besides, no hearse; it can be taken under the arm. Ah, ah;" added he, with a shout of fearful laughter, "how happy I am: she might have died at eighteen, at Louise's age, and they would not have given me credit for a large coffin."

"Ah, now, but this fellow is capable of going crazy," said Bourdin to Malicorne; "he makes one afraid." "But let us finish this; tie him; he shall weep on the road." Is it our fault if the little one is dead?"

"Such folks ought not to have children: come, come, comrade," added he, striking Morel on the shoulder, "we can wait no longer; since you can't pay—to prison." "To prison, Mr. Morel," cried a young and sweet voice: and a youthful girl, a brunette, fresh and rosy, entered quickly into the garret. "Ah, Mademoiselle Rigolette," said one of the children, "you are so good. Save Papa; they wish to take him to prison, and our little sister is dead."

"Adèle dead; "cried the young girl, whose large black eyes became filled with tears. "Your father in prison, that cannot be;" And immovable, she, in turn, looked at the artisan, his wife, and the officers.

Bourdin approached Rigolette. "Come, my good girl, you who are cool and collected, make this good man listen to reason; his little child is dead, very well, but he must follow us to Clichy—to prison, for debt. We are constables." "It is true, then?" cried the young girl. "Very true; the mother has the little one in bed, we cannot take it from her; it takes her attention. The father ought to profit by this, to be off." "My God! what misfortune," cried Rigolette: "what can be done?" "Pay, or go to prison; there's no alternative. Have you two or three thousand to lend them?" asked Malicorne, in a jeering manner. "If you have, go to your strong box and turn out the cash; we ask nothing better." "Ah, it is frightful," said Rigolette, with indignation—"to dare to joke before such misery."

"Well, without joking," said the other bailiff, "since you wish to do some good, try to prevent the woman from seeing us carry off the husband. You will prevent both from spending a bad quarter of an hour." Although brutal, the advice was good; Rigolette followed it, and approached Madeleine. She, wild with grief, did not

observe the young girl, who knelt down alongside of the bed with the other children. Morel recovered from his temporary alienation only to sink under the most poignant reflections. More calm, he was able to contemplate the horror of his position. Decided to this extremity, the notary must be unrelenting, the bailiffs did their duty. The artisan gave himself up. "Ah, now we are coming to the end," said Bourdin to him: "I cannot leave these diamonds here; my wife is half crazy," said Morel, showing the precious stones on his table. "The broker for whom I work will come to fetch them this morning, they are very valuable." "Good," said Tortillard, who still remained outside listening "good, good; La Chouette shall know this."

"Grant me only until to-morrow," continued Morel, "so that I can return these diamonds to the broker." "It is impossible; let us finish at once." "But I cannot, in leaving these diamonds, I expose them to being lost." "Take them with you; our hack is below; we will go to your broker; if he is not at home, you can leave them at the office at Clichy; they will be as safe there as in the bank. Come make haste, we will go without your wife and children perceiving it." "Grant me until to-morrow," continued Morel, in a supplicating tone, almost choked with tears. "No; we have alreay lost more than an hour here." "The funeral would only make you more sad," added Malicorne. "Ah! yes; it would make me more sad," said Morel, bitterly. "You fear so much to make people sad; then." "Come, make haste," said Malicorne, with brutal impatience. "How long is it since you were ordered to arrest me?" "It was only yesterday that we received the order from the notary." "Yesterday? So lately? and Louise has not been here; where is she? what has become of her?" said the artisan, taking from the work-bench a box filled with cotton, in which he placed the diamonds. "But I will not think of this now; in prison I'll have time enough."

"Come, make up your bundle and dress yourself."

"I have no bundle to make; I have only these diamonds to carry with me to leave at the office." "Dress yourself, then." "I have no other clothes than these." "You are going out in these rags?" said Bourdin. "I shall make you ashamed, doubtless?" said the workman, with bitterness. "No, since you go in your carriage," answered Malicorne. "Papa, mamma calls you, said one of the children. "Listen," whispered Morel quickly to one

of the bailiffs. "do not be inhuman: grant me a last favour. I have not the courage, to say farewell to my wife, to my children; my heart will break. If they see you take me away, they will run after me. I wish to avoid that. I beg you will say to me out loud, that you will return in three or four days, and pretend to go away; you will wait for me at the landing below. I will come out five minutes afterward; that will spare me the parting. I will not resist, I assure you: I shall become crazy; I was almost so just now."

"No, you don't: you wish to play me a trick;" said Malicorne; "you wish to escape, old fellow." "Oh, my God!" cried Morel, in mournful indignation. "I don't think that he'll fail," whispered Bourdin to his companion: "let us do as he asks, otherwise we will never get from here; I'll go and watch at the door; there is no other way of getting out; he cannot escape us."

"Very well, but may thunder catch him: what a kennel." Then addressing Morel, in a low tone, he said, "It is agreed upon; we will wait for you below: play your game, and make haste." "I thank you," said Morel. "Well, well," cried Bourdin in a loud tone, "since it is so, and you promise to pay, we will leave you; we will return in five or six days: but you must be punctual then." "Yes, gentlemen, I hope then to be able to pay," answered Morel.

The bailiffs went out; Tortillard from fear of being surprised, had disappeared from the staircase at the moment the officers came out of the garret.

"Madame Morel, do you understand?" said Rigolette, addressing the wife of the artisan, to arouse her from her mournful contemplation: "they leave your husband quiet. These two men have gone." "Mamma, do you hear? they do not take papa away," cried the eldest of the boys. "Morel, listen; listen; take one of your large diamonds, they will not know it, and we are saved," murmured Madeleine, quite delirious: our little Adèle will be no longer cold; she will be no longer dead."

Profiting by a moment when they were not looking at him, the artisan went out with precipitation. The bailiff awaited him without, on a kind of little platform, at the head of the landing-place. On this platform opened the door of a small closet, where Pipelet kept his stock of leather. Besides, as we have said, the worthy porter called this place his box at the melo-drama, because, by

means of a hole he had made in the wainscot, he could witness the sad scenes which took place in the garret.

The bailiff had remarked this door: for an instant he thought that perhaps his prisoner had reckoned on this place to fly to, or conceal himself. "Come, let us be moving," said he, putting his foot on the first step of the staircase, and making a sign for Morel to follow him. "One minute more for mercy's sake," said the artisan. He knelt on the platform: through one of the chinks of the door he cast a last look on his family, joined his hands, and, said in a touching tone, weeping bitter tears. "Farewell, my poor children; my poor wife, farewell." "Ah, now, will you finish your anthems?" said Bourdin, brutally: "Malicorne was right: what a kennel!"

Morel arose; he was about to follow the bailiff when these words resounded on the staircase, "My father, my father."

"Louise;" cried the artisan, lifting his hands towards heaven; "I can then embrace her before I go." "Thanks, my God! I arrive in time," said the voice, drawing nearer and nearer. And one could hear the young girl ascending the staircase. "Be tranquil, my dear," said a third voice, sharp, broken-winded, puffing and blowing, coming from a place lower down. "I'll hide myself, if it is necessary, in the alley: us three, my broom and old darling, and if they don't walk out of this after you have spoken to them: the beggars." The reader has doubtless, recognised Madame Pipelet who, less active than Louise, followed her slowly.

In a few moments, the daughter of the artisan was in the arms of her father. "It is you, Louise, my dear Louise," said Morel, weeping but how pale you are. My God! what is the matter?" "Nothing; nothing;" answered Louise, confusedly; "I have run so fast, here is the money."

"How!" "You are free." "You know, then?" "Yes, yes, here sir, take the money," said the young girl, giving a rouleau of gold to Malicorne. "But this money, Louise, this money." "You shall know all; be calm: come and pacify my mother." "No, directly." cried Morel, placing himself before the door. He thought of the death of his little girl, of which Louise was ignorant. "Stop, I must speak to you. But this money?" "Minute:" said Malicorne, having counted the pieces of gold which he put in his pocket. "Sixty-four francs, sixty-five that makes thirteen hundred francs. Is that all you have, my little woman?" "But you only owe thir-

teen hundred francs," said Louise, inquiringly, to her father. "Yes," said Morel. "Minute," answered the bailiff, "the note is for thirteen hundred francs; good; here is the note paid, but the costs, without the arrest, is already eleven hundred and forty francs."

"Oh, Heavens!" cried Louise: "I thought it was only thirteen hundred francs. But, sir, a little later we will pay you the rest; here is a large amount on account, is it not, my father?" "Later, very well: bring the money to the office, and we will let your father go. Come, march."

"You take him away?" "Straight off. It is on account: let him pay the rest, and he shall be free. Go on Bourdin; push ahead." "Mercy!" cried Louise. "Ah, what a row; now the whinings are to begin again; it is enough to make one sweat in mid-winter; my word of honour;" said the bailiff, brutally. Then advancing towards Morel, "If you do not walk right off, I'll take you by the collar, and make you go another fashion; this is too tiresome, and there's an end of it," "Oh, my poor father—I, who thought to save him at least," said Louise, quite overcome.

"No, no; God is not just:" cried the artisan, in a despairing tone. "Yes, God is just: he always has pity on honest people who suffer," said a soft and thrilling voice.

At the same moment Rodolphe appeared at the door of the little store-room, where he had witnessed many of the scenes we have just described. He was pale, and highly affected. At this sudden apparition, the bailiffs fell back. Morel and his daughter regarded the prince with astonishment.

Taking from the pocket of his waistcoat a little package of bank notes folded, Rodolphe drew out three, and, presenting them to Malicorne, said, "There are twenty-five hundred francs: return to this young girl the gold she gave you." Still more astonished, the officer took the notes in a hesitating manner, examined them, turned and returned, and finally pocketed them. Then recovering his impudence and assurance, as his astonishment vanished, he measured Rodolphe with a look, and said, "are your notes good, how came you by such a sum? Does it honestly belong to you?" added he. Rodolphe was very plainly dressed, and covered with dust, owing to his concealment in the store-room of Pipelet. "I told you to give back the gold to this young girl," answered he, in a short and rough tone.

"I told you; and how dare you speak to me thus?" cried the bailiff, advancing towards Rodolphe, in a threatening manner.

"The gold:" said the prince, seizing and pressing his arm so tightly, that under his iron grasp, the bailiff cried out, "Oh, you hurt me, let me go." "Give up the gold, then, you are paid; go away, without uttering a word of insolence, or I'll pitch you head foremost down the stairs." "Well, here is the gold," returning the rouleau to the young girl; "but don't be so familiar, nor injure me, because you are the strongest."

"That's true; who are you, that you give yourself such airs?" said Bourdin, standing behind his confederate: who are you?" "Who is he? impudence: he is my lodger, the prince of lodgers, foulmouth as you are," cried Madame Pipelet, who at last appeared, quite out of breath, and as usual her flaxen periwig "a la Titus." The porteress held in her hand an earthen saucepan filled with smoking soup, which she charitably brought to the Morels.

"What does she want, this old weasel?" said Bourdin. "If you make any remarks about my appearance, I'll throw myself on you, and bite," cried Madame Pipelet; "and then my lodger, my prince of lodgers, will pitch you from the top to the bottom of the stairs, as he said he would; and I'll sweep you out with my broom, like dirty rubbish as you are."

"This old woman is capable of raising the house against us. We are paid, we have made our expenses, let us go," said Bourdin to Malicorne. "There are your papers," said he, throwing them at the feet of Morel. "Pick them up, you are paid to be polite," said Rodolphe, stopping the bailiff with a strong grasp, and pointing to the papers.

Feeling at this new and formidable grasp, that he could not struggle against such an adversary, the officer stooped down, grumbling, and picked up the papers which he handed to Morel.

"You, although you have a fist of iron, had better not fall under our hands;" said Malicorne; and after shaking his clenched hand at Rodolphe, with one bound he descended ten steps, followed by his accomplice, who looked behind, rather alarmed. Madame Pipelet prepared herself to revenge the threat of the bailiff towards Rodolphe; looking at her saucepan with an inspired air, she cried heroically. "The debts of the Morels are paid: they are going to have enough to eat; they have no longer any need of my paste: look out below," and leaning on the railing, the old woman emp-

tied the contents on the backs of the two bailiffs, who had reached at this moment the first story. "And get out, then," added the porteress. "Ah, they are nicely soused; like a piper; like two pipers; eh, eh, must say so." "Ten thousand thunders!" cried Malicorne, inundated with the culinary preparation of Madame Pipelet, "will you look out above there, old hell-cat?"

While Madame Pipelet pursued the bailiffs with her shouts and insults, Morel cast himself at the feet of Rodolphe. "Ah! sir, you have saved our lives. To whom do we owe this unlooked-for succour?" "To God; you see he has always pity on honest people."

CHAPTER IX.

RIGOLETTE.

Louise, the daughter of the artisan, was remarkably handsome, a serious beauty; tall and slender, she resembled the antique Juno in the regularity of her features, and the huntress Diana in the elegance of her lofty figure. Notwithstanding her sunburnt complexion, the rough redness of her well-shaped hand, and her humble dress, this young girl, in her exterior was commanding—as the poor artisan would say in his paternal admiration, she had the air of a princess. We will not endeavour to paint the gratitude, the joyous transport of this family, so suddenly relieved from a frightful fate. For a moment, in this joyful reverse, even the death of the little girl was forgotten. Rodolphe alone remarked the extreme pallor of Louise, and the sombre thoughts with which she appeared overwhelmed, notwithstanding the deliverance of her father.

Wishing to tranquilise the Morels completely as to the future, and to explain a liberality which might compromise his incognito, Rodolphe said to the artisan, whom he led to the landing-place, whilst Rigolette prepared Louise for the death of her little sister—

"The day before yesterday, in the morning, a young lady came to see you?" "Yes, Sir; and she appeared much grieved at the state in which she found us." "Next to God, it is she you must thank, not me." "Can it be true? this young lady—" "Is your benefactress." "I have often taken goods to her house; the other day, in coming to hire a room on the fourth story, I learned from the porter your cruel situation; counting on the charity of this lady, I went to her house; she was soon here to judge for

herself the extent of your sufferings; she was much affected; but as this might have been the fruit of misconduct, she told me to get every information concerning you, desiring to conform her benefactions according to your probity." "Good and excellent lady. I had much reason to say—" "To say to Madeleine, if the rich only knew; is it not so?" "How, sir, you know the name of my wife? Who has told you that?"

"Since six o'clock this morning" said Rodolphe, "I have been concealed in the store room near your garret."

"You, sir?" "And I have heard all, all, excellent and honest man." "But how came you there?" "For good or bad; I could not be better informed than from your own mouth; I wanted to see and hear everything without your knowing it. The porter had spoken to me of this room, proposing to let me have it for a store room. This morning I asked to visit it, I remained there an hour, and I am convinced myself that there is not a character more upright, more noble, more courageously resigned than yours."

"Oh! sir, there is no great merit in it—I am born so, and I cannot, therefore, do otherwise."

"I know it; and if I do not praise you, still I esteem you. I was coming out of my covert to deliver you from the bailiffs, when I heard the voice of your daughter. I wished to allow her the pleasure of saving you. Unfortunately, the cupidity of these officers prevented the sweet satisfaction to poor Louise; then I appeared. I had recovered yesterday some sums that were due to me, and I have only made an advance to your benefactress in paying this unhappy debt. But your misfortunes have been so great, you have been so honest, so worthy, that the interest that is felt for you will not stop here. I can, in the name of your angel benefactress, promise you a peaceful, happy future, for you and yours." "Can it be possible? But, at least, her name, sir? this angel from heaven, this angel benefactress, as you call her?" "Yes, she is an angel; and you have great reason to say that both high and low have their troubles." "Is this lady unhappy?" "Who has not their sorrows? But I have no reason to conceal her name; she is called—"

Thinking that Pipelet was not ignorant that Madame d'Harville had come into the house to ask for the Commandant, Rodolphe, fearing the indiscreet tattle of the porteress, said,

after a moment's reflection, "I will tell you the name of this lady on one condition." "Oh! speak, sir." "It is, that you repeat it to no one: you understand, to no one." "Oh! I swear to you. But may I not at least thank her—this protectress of the unfortunate?" "I will ask Madame d'Harville: I do not doubt but that she'll consent."

"This lady is called—" "The Marchioness d'Harville."

"Oh! I shall never forget that name. She shall be my saint —my adoration. When I think that, thanks to her, my wife, my children are saved—saved! not all, not all—my poor little Adèle, we shall never see her again. Alas! we must acknowledge that we must soon have lost her, that she was doomed." And the artisan dried his tears. "As to the last duties to render to this little one, if you will believe me, this is what you must do. I do not occupy my room; it is large and airy; there is already one bed there; what is necessary shall be brought there for you and your family; you must move there; the body of your child can remain in the garret, where it will be this night, guarded and watched by a priest. I will go and beg Pipelet to attend to these sad details."

"But, sir, to deprive you of your room? too much trouble. Now that we are quiet, and I have no longer any fear of a prison, our poor garret will appear like a palace; above all, if my Louise remains with us." "Your Louise shall leave you no more. You said it would be your luxury to have her always with you. This shall be better—it shall be your recompense."

"Oh, God! is this possible? it seems like a dream. I have never been religious, but such an event—help so providential—it makes one believe." "Believe always: what is it that you risk?" "It is true," answered Morel, naively; "What do we risk?" "If the grief of a parent can admit of a compensation, I would say to you, that one of your daughters is taken away, but the other is returned to you." "It is true, sir; we have our Louise now." "You accept my room, is it not so? otherwise, how arrange for this sad watching of the dead? Think, then, of your wife, whose head is so weak—to leave under her eyes for twenty-four hours so touching a spectacle."

"You think of everything—everything. How kind you are, sir."

"It is your angel benefactress you must thank; her goodness inspires me. I say to you what she would say; she will approve,

I am sure. Thus you accept, it is agreed upon. Now tell me—this Ferrand?" A dark shade passed over the face of Morel.

"This Ferrand," said Rodolphe; "is it the same who lives in the Rue du Sentier?"

"Yes, sir; do you know him?" Then, assailed anew by his fears on the subject of Louise, he cried, "Since you heard what I said just now—say, have I any right to expect anything from this man? and who knows if my child—my Louise—"

He could not finish, and concealed his face in his hands.

Rodolphe understood his fears. "The conduct of this notary," said he, "ought to warn you; he no doubt has caused you to be arrested to revenge himself on your daughter: besides, I have reason to believe him a very dishonest man. If it is so," said he, after a moment's pause, "let us count on providence to punish him."

"He is very rich, and a great hypocrite."

"You are very poor and very desperate; did providence fail you?" "Oh! no, sir—great God! do not think I say this from ingratitude." "A guardian angel is come to you—an inexorable avenger awaits, perhaps, the notary—if he is culpable." At this moment Rigolette came out of the garret wiping her eyes. Rodolphe said to the young girl, "Is it not so, my neighbour, that Mr. Morel would do well to occupy my room with his family, while he is waiting for his benefactress, of whom I am the agent, to procure suitable lodgings?" Rigolette looked at Rodolphe with astonishment. "How, sir—you so generous?" "Yes, but on one condition; which depends on you, my neighbour."

"Oh! all that depends upon me—" "I have some very pressing accounts to regulate for my employer; they will be sent for shortly. My papers are below. If, as a neighbour, you will allow me to occupy myself with this work in your room, on a corner of your table, while you shall go on with yours, I will not incommode you; and the Morel family can, with the aid of Mr. and Madame Pipelet, establish themselves in my quarters." "Oh! if that's all, most willingly; neighbours should assist each other. You set the example by what you do for this good Mr. Morel. At your service, sir." "Call me neighbour; otherwise I shan't like it; and I dare not accept," said Rodolphe, smiling.

"Never mind that. I certainly can call you neighbour, since you are one." "Papa, mamma asks for you; come, come," said one of the little boys, coming out of the garret.

"Go, my dear Morel; when all is ready below, you shall be informed." The artisan entered precipitately into his garret. "Now neighbour," said Rodolphe to Rigolette, "you must do me another service." "With all my heart, if it is possible, my neighbour." "You are, I am sure, an excellent little housekeeper; I want to buy at once that which is necessary, so that the Morel family shall be suitably clothed, lodged, and settled in my room, where there is only my bachelor furniture, which was brought in yesterday. How shall we manage to procure at once all that we need for the Morels?" Rigolette reflected for a moment, and answered, "Before two o'clock you shall have this: good clothes ready made, warm and clean; good white linen for all the family; two small beds for the children; one for the grand-mother; in short, everything that is wanted. But that will cost much, much money."

"And how much?" "Oh! at least five or six hundred francs." "For the whole?" "Alas, yes. You see it is a good deal of money," said Rigolette, opening her large eyes, and shaking her head. "And we can have this?" "Before two o'clock." "But you are a fairy, then, my neighbour?" "Oh, no; it is very plain. The Temple is only two steps from here, and you will find everything there you need." "The Temple?" "Yes, the Temple." "What is that?" "You don't know the Temple, neighbour?" "No." "Yet it is there that folks like you and me fix themselves, when they are economical. It is much cheaper than elsewhere, and quite as good." "Really?" "I guess so, look here, I suppose—how much have you paid for your overcoat?" "I can't tell you exactly."

"How! you don't know how much your coat cost?" "I acknowledge to you in confidence," said Rodolphe smiling, "that I owe for it. Then, you can comprehend why I do not know." "Ah! my neighbour, I am afraid you do not keep your affairs in order."

"Alas! no." "You must correct this, if you wish that we should be friends, and I see already we shall be so; you seem so good. You shall see that you will not be sorry that you have me for a neighbour. You shall help me—I will assist you—we are neighbours; it is on that account. I will take good care of your linen; you will help me to wax the floor of my chamber. I rise early; I will awake you, so that you shall not be late to your shop;

I will knock against the wainscot until you say to me, 'Good-morning.'" "It is agreed: you shall awake me; you shall have charge of my linen; and I will wax your chamber, and you will keep things in order?" "Certainly. And when you want to buy anything, you will go to the Temple; for here is an example: your coat cost you eighty francs, I suppose; well, you could have had it in the Temple for thirty francs." "But this is wonderful! Thus you think that, with five or six hundred francs, there poor Morel—" "Would be furnished with everything, and very well, and for a long time?" "My neighbour, an idea!" "Let us have the idea." "You are a judge of housekeeping articles?" "Why, yes—a little," said Rigolette, with a slight shade of vanity. "Take my arm, and let us go to the Temple, and buy what we want for these poor people. Are you agreed?" "Oh, what happiness; poor people! But the money?" "I have some." "Five hundred francs?"

"The benefactor of the Morels has given me a 'carte blanche;' she will spare nothing, but that they shall be comfortable. If there is even a place where we can get better things than at the Temple—" "You can find nothing better nowhere; besides, there is everything to be had, and ready made; little dresses for the children, and dresses for their mother." "Come, then, to the Temple, my neighbour." "Ah! my God! but—"

"What then?" "Nothing—it is that—do you see—my time—it is all I possess. I am already behind-hand, in coming now and then to nurse poor Madame Morel; and, you conceive, one hour here, and one hour there, that makes little by little a day: it is thirty sous; and when one makes nothing for one day, one must live for all that. But, bah! never mind; I'll make up for it at night; and then, do you see, parties of pleasure are very rare, and I'll make one of this. It will appear to me that I am rich, and that it is with my own money that I buy all these good things for the Morels. Well, come; give me time to put on my bonnet and shawl, and I am yours, neighbour." "If you have only these to put on, will you allow me to bring my papers in your room the meanwhile?" "Willingly; then you can see my room," said Rigolette, proudly; "for my housekeeping is already done, which proves to you I am an early riser, and that, if you are a sleeper and lazy, so much the worse for you; I shall be a bad neighbour for you." And, light as a bird, Rigolette descended the staircase, followed by Rodolphe, who went into his own room to brush off

the dust of the store-room of Mr. Pipelet. Mlle. Rigolette alone knew the address of François Germain, the son of Madame Georges, and Rodolphe had great interest to discover this important secret. The walk to the Temple, which he had proposed to the grisette, would make her acquainted and more confiding, and drive from his mind the gloomy thoughts that the death of the little girl had awakened in him.

The child which Rodolphe regretted so bitterly was about this age. It was, in effect, just at this age that Fleur de Marie had been delivered to La Chouette by the housekeeper of the notary, Jacques Ferrand.

Rodolphe, laden, to keep up appearances, with a formidable roll of papers, entered the chamber of Rigolette.

She was about the same age as Fleur de Marie, her ancient friend of the prison. There was between the two young girls the same difference as between a smile and a tear; between joyous thoughtlessness and melancholy musings; between the most careless forethought and a gloomy incessant apprehension of the future; between a delicate, exquisite, lofty, poetical nature, painfully sensitive, incurably wounded by remorse, and a gay, lively, happy, active, unreflecting nature, although kind and obliging. Far from being egotistical, Rigolette had no sorrows but those of others; she sympathized with all her powers—devoted herself, body and soul, to those who suffered—but thought no more about it when her back was turned. Often she ceased from laughing to weep sincerely, and then she ceased from weeping to laugh again. A true child of Paris—preferring noise to solitude, movement to repose, the harsh and resounding harmony of the orchestra at the balls of the Chartreuse, or of the Colysée, to the soft murmur of the winds, the waters, and the foliage; the deafening noise of the streets of Paris, to the solitude of the country; the glare of fireworks, the glitter of a ball, the noise of rockets, to the serenity of a fine night, with stars, and darkness, and silence. Alas! yes; the good girl frankly preferred the black mud of the streets of the capital to the verdure of the flowery meadows—its dirty or scorching pavements, to the fresh and velvet moss of the woodpaths perfumed with violets; the suffocating dust of the Barriers or the Boulevards to the waving of golden corn, enamelled with the scarlet flowers of the wild poppy and azure of the blue-bells. Rigolette only left her room on sundays; and each

morning, to lay in her provision of chick-weed, bread, milk, and hemp-seed, for herself and her two birds; but she lived in Paris. She had been in despair to have lived elsewhere than in the capital.

Another anomaly: notwithstanding this taste for Parisian Pleasures; notwithstanding the liberty, or, rather, the state of abandonment in which she found herself, being alone in the world; notwithstanding the rigid economy which she was obliged to use in her smallest expenses, in order to live on thirty sous a day; notwithstanding the most piquant, the most mischievous, the most adorable little face in the world, never did Rigolette choose a sweetheart (we will not say lover). The grisette, let us say, only chose her sweethearts in her own class; that is to say, only chose her neighbours.

Rigolette was hardly eighteen, of a middling size, perhaps rather small, but so gracefully shaped, so finely modelled, so voluptuously turned, that her size responded well to her bearing, at once bold and modest; one inch more in height would have caused her to lose much of the gracious ensemble; the movement of her small feet, always encased in gaiter boots of black cloth, with rather thick soles, recalled to mind the coquettish light and discreet step of the quail. She did not appear to walk, she merely touched the pavement; she slid rapidly on its surface. This walk, peculiar to grisettes, ought to be attributed, without doubt, to three causes: to their desire to be thought handsome; to their fear of admiration; to the desire that they always have to lose as little time as possible in their peregrinations.

Rodolphe had as yet only seen Rigolette in the sombre light of the garret; he was then dazzled with the extraordinary bloom of the young girl, when he entered gently into a chamber lighted by two large windows. He remained for a moment immovable, struck with the beautiful picture which he had before his eyes.

Standing before a glass placed over the chimney-piece, Rigolette was tying under her chin the ribands of a little bonnet of embroidered tulle, trimmed with a small bunch of cherry-coloured favours; this bonnet, placed very high behind, discovered two large and thick bands of shining hair, black as jet, falling very low on her forehead; her fine eyebrows seemed traced with ink, and overshadowed two large black eyes, sparkling and wicked; her full, plump cheeks were like velvet of the freshest carnation, fresh

to the sight, fresh to the touch, like a rosy peach impregnated with the cold dew of the morning.

Her little turned-up nose, saucy and cunning, had made the fortune of a Lisette; her mouth, slightly large, with lips of rose well moistened, and little, white, pearly teeth, were smiling and provoking; of three charming dimples, which gave a mutinous grace to her face, two buried themselves in her cheeks, the other in her chin, not far from a beauty spot, a little black patch, most killingly placed near the corner of her mouth. Between an embroidered collar, well thrown back, and the bottom of the little bonnet, was seen the commencement of a forest of fine hair, so neatly tied and drawn up, that each hair was as perfectly displayed as if it had been painted on the ivory of her charming neck. A dress of blue merino, with tight sleeves, made by herself, set forth a figure so small and slender, that the young girl never wore a corset, from economy. The belt of a little apron of green levantine clasped her waist, which could have been spanned by the ten fingers. Confiding in the solitude, in which she believed herself to be, for Rodolphe yet remained at the door, motionless and unperceived, Rigolette, after having smoothed the bands of her hair with her little fairy white hands, put her small foot on a chair and bent over to tighten the lacings of her boot. This familiar operation could not be accomplished without exposing to the indiscreet eyes of Rodolphe a cotton stocking white as snow, and the half of a perfectly well-turned leg. After the detailed recital which we have made of her toilet, one can guess that the grisette had chosen her prettiest robe and apron, to do honour to her neighbour in their visit to the Temple.

She found the pretended clerk very much to her liking; his face, at once benevolent, proud, and bold, pleased her much; besides, he showed himself so kind towards the Morels, generously granting them in his chamber, that, thanks to this proof of goodness, and perhaps also thanks to his handsome features, Rodolphe had, without suspecting it, made a giant step in the confidence of the seamstress. She, from her practical ideas on the forced intimacy and reciprocal obligations which were imposed on neighbours, very frankly esteemed herself happy that a neighbour such as Rodolphe had succeeded the travelling clerk, Cabrion, François Germain; for she began to find that the other chamber had remained too long vacant, and, above all, she feared it would not be occu-

pied in a suitable manner. Rodolphe profited by his situation to cast a curious "coup d'œil" around the apartment, which he found even above the praises that Madame Pipelet had bestowed as to the excessive neatness of the housekeeping of Rigolette.

Having contemplated this apartment with interest and curiosity; he comprehended, perfectly the joyous air of this young girl. He imagined, to himself this solitude enlivened by the warbling of the birds and the songs of Rigolette; during the summer, doubtless, she worked near the open window, half veiled by a verdant curtain of sweet peas, orange nasturtiums, blue and white morning-glories; in the winter at the corner of her little stove, at the soft light of her lamp. Then each Sunday she varied this laborious life with a day of innocent pleasures, partaken with a neighbour as young, gay, thoughtless as herself. On Monday she resumed her labours, thinking on pleasures past and to come.

Rodolphe was thinking about these matters, when Rigolette turning her head, perceived him, and, without changing her attitude, said to him, "Ah! neighbour, you were there, then?"

CHAPTER X.

THE TWO NEIGHBOURS.

The boot being laced, the pretty leg disappeared under the ample folds of the blue dress, and Rigolette continued, "Ah! you were there, then, Mr. Slyboots?" "I was there, admiring in silence." "And what did you admire, my neighbour?" "This pretty little chamber, for you are lodged like a queen, my neighbour." "Marry! do you see, it is my luxury; if I never go out, at least I can please myself at home." "I cannot but admire it. What handsome curtains; and this commode—as handsome as mahogany. You must have spent a great deal of money here?"

"Don't speak of it! I had four hundred and twenty-five francs when I came out of prison; almost all is gone." "Came out of prison—you?"

"Yes, it is quite a history. You think—is it not so—that I was not in prison for having done wrong?"

"Doubtless; but how was it?" "After the cholera, I found myself alone in the world. I was then about ten years old."

"But, until that time, who took charge of you?" "Oh! very good people; but they are dead with the cholera." Here the large black eyes of Rigolette became moist. "The few things they possessed were sold to pay their debts, and I found myself alone, no one being willing to receive me. Not knowing what to do, I went to the guard-house, which was opposite our dwelling, and I said to the sentinel, 'Good soldier, my parents are dead; I do not know where to go. What must I do?' Thereupon the officer came; he sent me to a commissioner, who sent me to prison as a vagrant, and I came out at sixteen."

"But your parents?" "I do not know who my father was: I was six years old when I lost my mother, who had withdrawn me from the foundling-hospital, where she had been forced to send me at first. The good people of whom I have spoken lived in the same house; they had no children: seeing me an orphan, they took me with them." "And what was their trade—their condition?"

"Papa Cretu, I called him thus, was a house painter, and his wife embroidered."

"They were at least in easy circumstances?"

"Like every household, there were ups and downs; one day abundance, if work was plenty; to-morrow want, if there was none; but that did not hinder them from being always gay and always content." (At this souvenir the face of Rigolette became once more smiling.) "There was not in the quarter such a household: always lively, always singing: with all that good as they could be, what they had for themselves they had for others. Madame Cretu was a jovial woman of thirty, neat, lively, and gay as a lark. Her husband was another Roger Bontemps; he had a large nose, a large mouth, always a paper cap on his head, and such a funny face—so funny that you could not look at him without laughing. When he returned to the house from his work, he did nothing but sing, make faces, aud play like a child; he made me dance, jump on his knees; he played with me as if I had been of his age, and his wife spoiled me. Oh! it was a blessing. Both of them required but one thing of me, which was, to be always in good humour; and I was not wanting in that. Thank God! Thus they baptised me Rigolette, from 'rigoler,' to make merry, and the name remains to me. As to gaiety, they set me the example. Never have

I seen them sad. If they made any reproaches, it was the wife who said to the husband, 'Stop, Cretu, it is foolish; you make me laugh too much;' or it was he who said to his wife, 'Stop; hold your tongue, Romanette; hold your tongue, you make me ill, you are too funny.' As for me, I laughed to see them laugh. In this manner was I brought up; and as they formed my character, I hope I have profited by it."

"Wonderfully, my neighbour. Thus they never disputed among themselves?"

"Never, never. Sunday, Monday, sometimes Tuesday, they played, as they said, *a frolic*, and they always took me with them. Papa Cretu was a good workman; when he wished to work, he earned as much as he wanted; his wife also. As soon as they had enough for Sunday and Monday, and to live along so so, they were content.

"After that, if there was no work?"

"They were just as well satisfied. I recollect that, when we had only bread and water, Papa Cretu took from his library—"

"What! he had a library?"

"He called a little closet so, where he kept a collection of songs. He bought all the new ones, and learned them all. When there was no bread in the house, he took from his library an old cookery book, and said to us, 'Come, let us see what we shall eat to-day; this? that?' And he would read out the names of a thousand good things. Each one would choose a dish. Papa Cretu took an empty saucepan, and, with the funniest capers in the world, he would pretend to put into it everything that was necessary to make a good ragout; and he would make believe to turn it all out into an empty plate, which he placed on the table, in such a manner as to make us hold our sides with laughter; then he would take his book again, and, while he read to us the receipt for a good fricassée which we had chosen, and which made our mouths water, we ate our bread, shouting with laughter, like fools."

"And had this joyous household any debts?"

"Never. As long as there was any money we feasted; when there was none, we dined in *water-colours*, as Papa Cretu said, borrowing the expression from his trade."

"And the future, did they not think of that?"

"Ah, yes. The future, for us, were the Sundays and Mondays.

In summer we passed them at the barriers; in winter, in the suburbs. • • • • • • •

"But now, see," said Rigolette, "how I talk. It is that, when I once get on the subject of these kind people, I don't know when to stop. Here, neighbour, be kind enough to take my shawl from the bed, and fasten it under my collar with this large pin, and we will descend, for we will not be in time to choose at the Temple what you wish to buy for these poor Morels."

Rodolphe hurried to obey the orders of Rigolette. He took from the bed a large plaid shawl, brown and red, and carefully placed it on the charming shoulders of Rigolette.

"Now, neighbour, raise my collar a little; fasten the dress and shawl together; stick the pin in well; but, above all, be careful not to prick me."

To execute these commands, it was necessary that Rodolphe should almost touch this ivory neck. The day was dark; he drew very near, doubtless too near, for the grisette uttered a little startled cry. We cannot tell the cause of this cry. Was it the point of the pin? Was it the mouth of Rodolphe which had touched this white and polished neck? However this may be, Rigolette turned quickly, and cried in a manner half laughing, half sad, which made Rodolphe almost regret the liberty he had taken.

"Pardon me; I am so unhandy."

"On the contrary, sir; and it is this of which I complain. Come; your arm; but be correct, or we will quarrel."

"True, my neighbour, it was not my fault; your pretty neck was so white, that I had a kind of dizziness. In spite of myself, my head fell, and—"

"Well, well; for the future, I shall take care to give you no cause for this dizziness," said Rigolette, shaking her finger at him. Then she shut her door. "Here, my neighbour, take my key; it is too large; it will make a hole in my pocket; it is a real little pistol."

And then she laughed.

Rodolphe took charge of an enormous key, which would have cut a glorious figure on one of those allegorical plates which the vanquished used humbly to offer to the conquerors of a city. Although Rodolphe believed that time had changed his appear-

ance, yet, when he passed the door of the quack, he raised the collar of his paletot.

"Neighbour, do not forget to inform Pipelet that things will be brought here, which must be sent to your chamber," said Rigolette.

"You are right, my neighbour; we will stop for a moment in the porter's lodge."

Pipelet, his everlasting chapeau on his head, was, as usual, dressed in his green coat, and gravely seated before a table covered with pieces of leather, and the wrecks of all sorts of shoes. He was, then, busy in new-soleing a boot, in the serious and conscientious manner which he always preserved. Anastasia was absent from the lodge.

"Well, Pipelet," said Rigolette to him, "I hope I have some news. Thanks to my neighbour, the poor Morels are out of trouble. When one thinks that they were going to take the poor man to prison! Oh, the bailiffs are the real *no-hearts!*"

"And *no-manners* also, mademoiselle," added Pipelet, in an angry tone, and gesticulating with the boot, into which he had introduced his left arm and hand. "No; I do not fear to repeat it, in the face of heaven and man; they are *unmannerly fellows!* They profited by the darkness of the staircase to use their indecent gestures on the figure of my wife. On hearing her cries of offended modesty, in spite of myself, I gave up to the vivacity of of my character. I do not conceal it; my first movement was to remain immovable, and to become purple with shame, in thinking of the odious attacks which Anastasia was the victim, which her wandering reason proved, since, in her delirium, she threw her saucepan from the top to the bottom of the staircase. At this moment the frightful debauchees passed before my lodge."

"You pursued them, I hope, Mr. Pipelet," said Rigolette, preserving her countenance with great difficulty. "I thought of it," answered Pipelet, with a profound sigh; "I am no more cruel than any other; but when these brazen faces passed before the lodge, my blood boiled, and I could not prevent myself from placing my hands quickly before my eyes, to hide them from the sight of these notorious malefactors. But this does not astonish me; something unfortunate must happen to-day; I dreamed of this monster of a Cabrion." Rigolette smiled, and

the noise of the sighs of Pipelet was confounded with the blows of the hammer which he applied to the sole of the old boot. From the remarks of Alfred, it was evident that Anastasia had most outrageously bragged, and misrepresented the affair. "My neighbour," whispered Rigolette to Rodolphe, "let this poor Pipelet think his wife has been cajoled; secretly, it flatters him." "You have wisely taken the wisest part, my dear Pipelet," said Rodolphe, "that of contempt. Besides, the virtue of Madame Pipelet is above all attempts."

"Her virtue, sir!" and Alfred began to gesticulate again with his boot. "I'd place my head on the scaffold. The glory of the great Napoleon, and the virtue of Anastasia, I can answer as for my own honour." "And you are right, Pipelet. But forget these wretches, and render me a service, I pray you." "Men are created to assist one another," said Pipelet, in a sententious and melancholy manner; "so much the more reasonable, when so kind a lodger as you, is in question." "I wish to have some things, I shall send here directly, carried to my room. They are for the Morels." "I will attend to them, sir."

"And then," said Rodolphe, sadly, "I wish to send for a priest to watch and pray over the little girl they have lost, to go and announce her death, and at the same time prepare for her funeral. Here is the money; arrange every thing; the benefactor of the Morels wishes everything done well." "Depend upon me, sir; Anastasia is gone to buy our dinner; as soon as she returns, I will make her take charge of the lodge, and I will attend to your commissions." At this moment, a man, so completely wrapped up in his cloak that his eyes could scarcely be seen, asked, without coming too near the lodge, if Madame Burette was at home.

"Do you come from Saint Denis?" asked Pipelet, with a knowing look. "Yes; in an hour and a quarter." "Just so; then you may go up." The man in the cloak ran rapidly up stairs. "What does this mean?" asked Rodolphe. "Some goings on at Burette's; it is going and coming continually. She told me, this morning, 'You will ask every one who inquires for me—Do you come from Saint Denis?' those who answer, 'Yes; in an hour and a quarter, you will let them come up; but no others.'"

"It is a real countersign," said Rodolphe, quite interested,

"Exactly, sir; thus, I said to myself, 'There's something going on at Burette's,' without reckoning that Tortillard, a little cripple, who lives with Bradamanté, came in to-night at two o'clock, with an old woman called La Chouette. She remained until four o'clock with Burette, while a carriage waited at the door. 'Where did this one-eyed woman come from?' 'What did she here at that hour?' Such were the two questions which I asked myself, without being able to reply," added Pipelet, gravely. "And this woman, that you call La Chouette, went away at four o'clock in a hack?" asked Rodolphe. "Yes, sir; she will, no doubt, return, for Burette said the countersign did not regard the Borgnesse."

Rodolphe thought, not without, reason, that some new scheme of villainy was in agitation; but, alas! he was far from thinking how much he was interested in it. "It is, then, agreed, my dear Pipelet; do not forget I have told you, and also beg your wife to send them a good repast from the nearest tavern." "Be quite tranquil," said Pipelet; as soon as my wife returns, I will go to the mayor's, to the church, and to the tavern. To the church for the dead; to the tavern for the living," added he, philosophically and poetically. "It is just as good as done."

At the entrance of the alley, Rodolphe and Rigolette met, face to face, Anastasia, who, returning from market, carried a basket of provisions. "Good," cried the porteress, looking at the neighbours with a significant air; "already arm in arm; that's right. Ah; now youth will be youth; pretty girl must have a fine beau; vive l'amour! and go along with you;" and the old woman disappeared, crying, "Alfred, don't groan, old darling; here is your Stasia, who brings you some dainties, old sweet tooth."

Rodolphe, offering his arm to Rigolette, left with her the house in the Rue du Temple.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BUDGET OF RIGOLETTE.

To the snow of the night had succeeded a very cold wind; the pavement, ordinarily muddy, was almost dry. Rigolette and Rodolphe directed their steps towards the immense and singular bazaar, the Temple. The young girl leaned without any ceremony

on the arm of her cavalier, as little embarrassed as if they had been for a long time acquainted. "Ain't she droll, this Madame Pipelet, with her remarks?" said the grisette to Rodolphe. "I'faith, my neighbour, she is right." "In what?" "She said, 'Youth must pass, vive l'amour.'" "Well!" "It is just my manner of thinking." "How?" "I wish to pass my youth with you; to be able to cry vive l'amour, and go where you would conduct me." "I think so; you are not difficult." "Where would be the harm? we are neighbours." "If we were not, I should not go out with you in this manner." "You tell me, then, to hope?" "To hope what?" "That you will love me?" "I love you already." "Really?" "It is quite simple; you are good, you are gay; although poor yourself, you do what you can for these poor Morels, in interesting rich people in their misfortunes; you have a face I like, a fine figure. There, I hope you have reasons enough for me to love you." Then stopping to laugh heartily, Rigolette cried, "Do you look at that woman, with her old fur shoes; one would say she was dragged along by two cats without tails," and then another laugh. "I prefer to look at you, my neighbour; I am so happy to think that you love me already."

"I say this to you, because it is so. If you did not please me, I would tell you all the same. I have no reproaches to make myself for ever having deceived any one, nor of having been a coquette; when any one pleases me I tell them so at once." Then again interrupting herself to stop before a shop, the grisette cried, "Oh! do look at that pretty clock and the two fine vases. I had already three francs ten sous, in my money box to buy such. In five or six years economy I should have had enough." "Economy, my neighbour, and you earn—" "At least thirty sous a day, sometimes forty; but I reckon only on thirty; it is more prudent, and I regulate my expenses accordingly," said Rigolette, with an air as important as if it concerned the financial balance of a formidable budget. "But with thirty sous a day, how can you live?" "The account is not long: shall I make it for you, my neighbour? you have a prodigal manner, it shall serve you for an example." "Let us see, my neighbour."

"My thirty sous a day make forty-five francs a month, ain't it so?" "Yes." "Twelve francs for my rent, and twenty-three for my living." "Twenty-three francs for your living?" "O

yes, quite as much. Confess that, for a lark like me, that it is enormous! for instance, I refuse myself nothing." "Ah! you little glutton." "Yes, but I include the food for my birds." "It is certain that if you all three live on this sum, it is less exhorbitant. But let me have the daily expenses—always for my instruction." "Listen—well, one pound of bread is four sous; two sous for milk, that makes six; four sous for vegetables in winter, or fruits and salads in summer; I adore salad, because it is so easily dressed, and does not soil the hands; well, now you have ten sous; three sous for butter, or for oil and vinegar for seasoning, thirteen; fine clear water, oh! that is my luxury, that makes me fifteen sous, if you please; add to this each week two or three sous for chickweed and hemp, to regale my birds, who ordinarily eat crumbs of bread and some milk, it is twenty-two or twenty-three francs a month, neither more nor less."

"And you never eat any meat?" "Ah, yes, meat; that costs from ten to twelve sous a pound; can one even think of it? and besides, that smells of the kitchen; while milk, and vegetables, and fruit are always ready. Hold! a dish that I adore, which is not embarrassing, and which I make to perfection." "Let us have the dish."

"I put five yellow potatoes in the oven of my stove; when they are baked I mash them with a little butter and milk—a pinch of salt. It is a feast for the gods! if you are a good boy I'll make some for you to taste."

"Arranged by your pretty hands, it must be excellent. But come, your account, my neighbour. We have already twenty-three francs for board, twelve francs for lodging; that makes thirty-five per month."

"To reach the forty-five or fifty that I earn, there remain ten or fifteen for my wood during winter, my oil, and washing; that is to say, for my soap; for, excepting my sheets, I do my own washing. It is, again, my luxury—a washerwoman would cost the eyes out of my head—while I can iron pretty well, and thus get along. During the five months of winter I burn a load and a half of wood; and I spend four or five sous for oil each day for my lamp; that makes about eighty francs a year for my wood and light."

"So that, at the most you have about one hundred francs left."

"Yes; and there it is I economize my three francs ten sous."

"But your dresses, your shoes, this pretty bonnet?" "My bonnets I only put on when I go out; and that does not ruin me, for I turn them myself; as to my robes, my boots—isn't the Temple close at hand?"

"Ah, yes—this fortunate Temple. Well, you find there—"

"Excellent, and very pretty dresses. You must know that the great ladies are accustomed to give their old dresses to their maids. When I say old, that is to say they have worn them for a month or two in the carriage; and the maids go and sell them in the Temple, almost for nothing. Thus, you see, I have a robe of very fine merino, for which I paid fifteen francs; it has cost, no doubt, sixty; it had hardly been worn; I altered it to my figure, and I hope it does me honour." "It is you who does it honour, my neighbour. But, with the help of the Temple, I begin to see how you manage."

"Is it not so? You can get charming dresses for summer for five or six francs; boots, like these I wear, for two or three. Now, look here! would you not say they were made for me?" said Rigolette, stopping to shew the end of her charming foot. "The foot is charming, it is true, but it must be difficult for you to fit it; but I suppose you will tell me they have children's shoes, also, at the Temple."

"You are a flatterer; but acknowledge that a little girl, all alone, can live on thirty sous a day. I must say, however, that the four hundred and fifty francs that I brought from prison have nicely helped me to establish myself. When I was once seen, all furnished, it inspired confidence, and they gave me work to take home; but I had to wait a long time before I got it; happily, I had reserved enough to live three months without reckoning on work." "With your little thoughtless manner, do you know you have much method and regularity." "Marry! when one is alone in the world, and wishes to be under obligations to no one, it is quite necessary to build and arrange one's own nest, as they say." "And your nest is charming; is it not?" "For I refuse myself nothing; I have even an apartment above my station; I have birds; in summer, always at least two pots of flowers on my chimney, without reckoning the boxes in my window, and those of my cage; and yet, as I tell you, I had already three francs and a half in my money-box; so that, some day, I might be

able to buy an ornament for my chimney-piece." "And what has become of these savings?" "Oh! since I have seen these poor Morels so unfortunate! There is no good sense in having three foolish pieces of twenty sous in a money-box, when honest folks are dying with hunger alongside of you; so I lent my three francs to the Morels. It was not to humiliate them, for I would have given it willingly." "You did well, my neighbour, for, now they are once more comfortable, they will reimburse you." "That is true; and I will not refuse it: it will be the commencement—to buy the ornaments—it is my dream!" "And then you ought to think a little about the future." "The future?" "If you should fall sick for instance." "I? sick?" and again she burst into a merry laugh; a laugh so loud, that a fat man who walked before her, carrying a dog under his arm, turned round, supposing it was at him. Rigolette, without ceasing to laugh, made him a half curtsey, accompanied by such a droll look, that Rodolphe could not prevent himself from partaking of the hilarity of his companion. The man continued his way grumbling. "Are you crazy? come, my neighbour!" said Rodolphe, assuming the serious. "It is your fault."

"My fault?" "Yes; you say such funny things." "Because I say you may fall sick?" "Sick! I?" and another laugh, "Why not?" "Do I look like it?"

"Never have I seen a more rosy, healthful face."

"Well, then, why do you wish that I should fall sick? How, at eighteen, with the life I lead, can that be possible? I get up at five o'clock, summer as well as winter: I go to bed at ten or eleven; I eat as much as I want, which is not much, it is true; I suffer not from the cold; I work all day; I sing like a lark; I sleep like a marmot; I have a free, joyous, and contented heart; I am sure not to want work, so now how would you have me fall sick? It would be too funny." And again a laugh.

Rodolphe struck with this blind and happy confidence in the future, reproached himself with having run the risk of shaking it. He thought, with a kind of affright, that one month's sickness might destroy this peaceful and joyous life. This profound faith in her strength and her eighteen years, her only wealth, seemed to Rodolphe holy, and to be respected. On the part of the young girl, it was not thoughtlessness, nor improvidence; it was an instinctive belief in Divine justice and commiseration, who could not aban-

don an industrious and good creature, a poor girl, whose only fault was to count on the youth and health she had from God. In the spring time, when with agile wing, the birds of heaven, singing and joyous, skim on the verdant meadows, or cut the air, rising to the blue and smiling skies, have they any care for the coming frosts of winter?

"Then," said Rodolphe to the grisette, "you desire nothing?" "Nothing." "Absolutely nothing?" "No, that is to say, understand me, the ornament for my mantelpeice; and I will have it. I don't know when; but I have it in my head, and it shall be. I will sooner encroach on my nights." "And besides this ornament?" "Nothing, only since to-day." "How is that?" Because, only the day before yesterday I desired a neighbour, who might please me, and to arrange with him as I have always done—good housekeeeping, so as to render services to him, which he would render to me in return." "That is already agreed upon, you will take care of my linen, and I will wash your floor, without reckoning that you are to awaken me early, by knocking against the wall." "And you think that's all?" "What else is there?" "Ah, well, you are not at the end. Must you not, on Sundays, take me a walk to the Barriers, or on the Boulevards? I have only that day for recreation." "That's it: in summer we will go to the country." "No, I detest the country; I like Paris alone. Yet, in the times past, I have made some excursions to Saint Germain with one of my prison companions, who was called La Goualeuse, because she was always singing; a very good little girl."

"What has become of her?" "I do not know; she spent her prison money without appearing to amuse herself much; she was always sad, but always amiable and charitable. When we went out together, I had no work; when I got some, I never stirred; I gave her my address; she has not been to see me; doubtless she is as busy as I am. I tell you, I like Paris better than all. Thus, when you can, on Sundays, you will take me to dine at a tavern, sometime to the play, otherwise, if you have no money, you will take me to see the shops in the arcades; it will amuse me almost as much. But don't you be afraid; in our little excursions I shall do you honour. You will see how genteel I am in my pretty blue Levantine dress, which I only wear on Sundays; it fits me like a glove; I have with this a little bonnet, trimmed with lace and orange ribands, which suits well with my black hair, boots of Turkish sa-

tin, which I had made for me, and a silk shawl, imitation Cashmere. Go along, every one will turn to see us pass. The men will say, 'but ain't she genteel, this little girl upon my word:' and the women, on their side, 'Really he has a very distinguished air, this tall, slender young man; his little brown moustaches become him so well; and I shall be of the same opinion as the ladies for I adore moustaches. Unfortunately, Germain did not wear them on account of his office. Cabrion had them, but they were red, like his beard, and I don't like a red beard; and besides, he was too much of a boy in the streets, and tormented Pipelet so. To be sure, Girandeau (my neighbour before Cabrion) had a very good appearance, but he squinted; at first this troubled me, for he always appeared to be looking at some one alongside of me, and without thinking, I turned to look who," and another laugh.

Rodolphe listened to this prattle with curiosity; he asked himself, for the third time, what he ought to think of the virtue of the grisette. Sometimes her freedom of speech and the recollections of the large lock, made him almost believe that she loved her neighbours as brothers, as companions, and that Madame Pipelet had calumniated her; then he thought it impossible that a young girl so situated could have escaped the blandishments of the three gentlemen who were her neighbours previously. Yet the frankness, the original familiarity of Rigolette caused fresh doubts. "You charm me, my neighbour, in thus disposing of my Sundays," said Rodolphe, gaily; "be quite easy; we will have some famous parties."

"One moment, Mr. Spendthrift; I shall carry the purse, I forewarn you. In summer we can dine very well—for three francs, at the Chartreuse or at the Hermitage Montmartre, a half dozen contre-dances or waltzes into the bargain, and a ride on the flying horses—I adore to get on the horses, that will just make your five francs, not a liard more. Do you waltz?" "Very well." "Ah, good, Cabrion always trod on my feet, and, besides, for fun, he threw torpedoes on the floor, so they will not have us any more at the Chartreuse." And another laugh. "Don't be afraid, I will answer for my reserve on the score of torpedoes; but what shall we do in winter?" "In winter, as one has less hunger, we can dine very well for forty sous, and we shall have three francs left for the play, for I will not allow you to go over your five francs. It is quite enough indeed, but you would spend it alone either at a smoking

room, or at billiards with worthless fellows, who smell of the pipe horribly. Is it not better to spend them gaily with a little friend, ever laughing, who will find the time to save you some expense in hemming your cravats, and taking care of your clothes?" "Why it is clear gain, my neighbour. Only if my friends should meet me with my pretty little friend under my arm?" "Well, they would say, he is not unfortunate, this devil of a Rodolphe." "You know my name?" "When I heard the chamber was let, I asked to whom." "And my friends would say, he is very fortunate this Rodolphe; and they will envy me."

"So much the better." "They will think me happy, and if I am not so happy as they think I am:" "What is that to you? as long as they think so." "But your reputation?" Rigolette burst into a loud laugh. "The reputation of a grisette, does any one believe in such meteors?" answered she. "If I had father or mother, brother or sister, I would on their account take care what people said: I am all alone, it regards me only." "But I should be very unhappy." "For what?" "To pass for being happy, while, on the contrary, I shall love you, just like you dine at Papa Cretu's in eating your dry bread while he read the cookery book.'

"Bah! you shall be so; I shall be to you so gentle, so grateful, so little troublesome that you shall say, 'After all, just as well to pass my Sundays with her as with a comrade.' If you are not engaged on week evenings, and it does not tire you, you shall come and pass the evening with me; you shall read romances, which you must hire: just us well do that as lose your money at billiards; if not, if you are busy until late, or would rather go to a café, you shall say good night to me on coming in, if I am still up. If I am in bed, the next morning I will say good-day to you through the walls to awaken you. Germain, my last neighbour, passed all his evenings in this manner with me, and he did not complain. He read to me all Walter Scotts' works. That was amusing. Sometimes on Sundays, when the weather was bad, instead of going to the theatre, or going out at all, he went and bought something, we made a real little dinner in my room, and after that we read. That amused me almost as much as the play. It is to say to you that I am not difficult, and I do what one wishes. And, besides, you, who talk of being sick, if you ever should be; I am a real little sister of charity: ask the Morels. Ah, you don't know your happiness, Mr. Rodolphe; it is a real prize in the lot-

tery to have me for a neighbour." "It is true, I have always had luck; but this Germain, where is he now?" "In Paris I think." "You don't see him any more?" "Since he left the house, he has not returned." "But where does he live? what does he do?"

"Why all these questions, my neighbour?"

"Because I am jealous of him," said Rodolphe, smiling, "and that I wish—"

"Jealous!" and again Rigolette laughed. "There is no cause, go along. Poor fellow."

When the hilarity of Rigolette was a little appeased, Rodolphe continued; "Seriously, my neighbour, I have the greatest interest in knowing where to meet Mr. Germain; you know where he lives and, without boasting, you ought to believe me incapable of abusing the secret, I ask you. I swear to you it is for his interest." "Seriously, my neighbour, I believe you could wish to do much good to Mr. Germain, but he has made me promise that I would not tell his address to any one; and since I dont tell it to you, it is because it is impossible: that ought not to make you angry with me. If you had confided a secret to me, you would be pleased, is it not so, to see me act as I do? but look here, once for all, do not speak any more about this: I have made a promise; I will keep it, and whatever you may say I shall make you the same answer." Notwithstanding her levity, her heedlessness, the young girl accented these last words so firmly, that Rodolphe comprehended, to his great regret, that he would not obtain from her what he wished to know. It was repugnant to him to employ cunning to surprise the confidence of Rigolette: he waited, and answered gaily:

"Let us speak no more about it; you keep so well the secrets of others, that I am no longer astonished that you keep your own."

"Secrets; mine! I should like to have some; it must be very amusing."

"How; have you not a little secret concerning the heart?"

"A secret—of the heart?" "In short, have you never loved?" said Rodolphe, regarding her fixedly, to divine the truth.

"How; never loved? and Girandeau? and Cabrion? and Germain? and you, then." "Have you not loved them more than me? differently from me?" "In truth, no; less, perhaps; for it was necessary to become accustomed to the squint of Gi-

randeau; to the red beard and jokes of Cabrion; to the sadness of Germain, for he was very sad, this poor young man. You, on the contrary, pleased me at once."

"Come, my neighbour, don't be angry; I am going to speak to you in a neighbourly manner."

"Go on; my character is well formed; and, besides, you are so good, that you would not have the heart, I am sure of it, to say anything that would give me pain."

"No doubt. But come, frankly, have you never had a lover?"

"Lover! ah, yes, do you think I have the time?"

"What has time to do with that?" "What has it to do? why, every thing. In the first place, I should be jealous as a tiger; I should always have the heartache; well, do I earn money enough to be able to lose two or three hours a day to weep and moan? And if they deceive me, how many tears, how much sorrow; ah, well, that would be a fine business."

"But all lovers are not unfaithful: do not make their mistresses weep." "That would be worse still; if he was so kind, could I live a moment away from him? and as he would be absent all day at his office, his shop, or his workroom, I should be like a poor soul in purgatory, during his absence. I could imagine a thousand things. * * * It is all that I can do, quiet as I am now, to get along by working twelve or fifteen hours a day. You see, then, if I lose three or four days a week in this way, troubling and tormenting myself, how can I ever regain the time? Impossible. No; I love my liberty too well."

"Your liberty?" "Yes; I could enter as first workwoman at the shop where I get my work. I should have four hundred francs, lodging and nourishment." "And you do not accept?"

"Certainly not. I should be under wages, like the others; instead of that, no matter how poor it is, I am, at least, at home; owe nothing; I have courage, health, strength, and gaiety; a good neighbour, like you; what do I want more?" "And do you never think of marrying?"

"I marry! I can only marry one as poor as myself. Look at the Morels, see what it leads to; while that, when one has only to answer for one's self, one can always retire."

"Then you never build castles in Spain—dreams?" "Yes; I dream of my chimney ornaments. Except this, what do you

wish that I should desire?" "But if a relation had left you a small fortune; twelve hundred francs income, I'll suppose; to you who live on five hundred."

"Marry! that would be, perhaps, well; perhaps, an evil." "An evil?" "I am happy as I am; I only know the life I lead; I do not know that which I should lead if I were rich. Look ye, my neighbour, when, after a good day's work, I go to rest at night, when my lamp is out, and by the light of the few coals which remain in my stove, I see my chamber so neat, my curtains, my chairs, my birds, my watch, my table laden with stuffs which have been confided to me, I say to myself, 'All this is mine, and I owe it but to myself;' true, my neighbour, these ideas lull me to sleep gently; proudly, sometimes; but always content. Well, if I owed all this to an old relation, it would not give me so much pleasure, I am sure. But hold; here we are at the Temple; acknowledge, now, that it is a superb coup d'œil."

CHAPTER XII.

THE TEMPLE.

Although Rodolphe did not partake of the profound admiration of Rigolette at the sight of the Temple, he was, nevertheless, struck with the singular aspect of this enormous bazaar which has its quarters and its passages. Towards the middle of the Rue du Temple, not far from a fountain which is placed at the angle of a large square, can be seen a large building of timber, roofed with slate, and in the form of a parallelogram. It is the Temple. Bounded on the left by the Rue du Petit Thouasis, on the right by the Rue Percée, it terminates at a vast circular building, a colossal rotunda, surrounded by a gallery with arcades. A long passage, through the centre, divides it into two equal parts: these are, in their turn, divided and subdivided by a multitude of small lateral and transverse passages, which cross it in every direction, and are sheltered from the rain by the roof of the edifice.

In this bazaar, all new merchandise is generally prohibited; but the most wretched shreds of stuff, of whatever description, the smallest scraps of iron, copper, or steel, find here, both

buyer and seller. There are, here, merchants of fragments of cloth of all colours, all shades, all qualities, every age, destined to match the pieces to mend old or torn clothes. There are shops where you can find heaps of old shoes run down at the heels, bursted out, cracked; things with a name, without form, without colour; among which appear, here and there, some fossil soles, an inch thick, studded with nails, like the door of a prison, hard as a horseshoe, real skeletons of shoes, all the cohesions of which have been destroyed by time; yet it is all bought and sold; there are *merchants* who live by this trade.

There exist retailers of hatbands, fringes, balls, cords, silk, cotton, and thread ravellings, proceeding from the demolition of curtains completely worn out.

Others turn their attention to the trade of women's hats; these hats never reach the shops except in the bags of the dealers, after the strangest peregrinations, the most violent transformation.

Still farther on, at the sign of the *Fashion of the Day*, under the arcades of the rotunda, raised at the end of the large passage which divides the Temple in two parts, are hung up myriads of clothes, of colours, forms, and shapes the most extraordinary, still more so than the women's old hats.

This exhibition of old shoes, old hats, and old clothes, is the comical part of this bazaar; it is the district of the things of little value disguised and displayed with much pretension; but we must acknowledge that this vast establishment is of great utility for the poorer classes. There they buy at two or three hundred per cent. discount, excellent things, almost new, of which the depreciation is almost imaginary. One of the sides of the Temple, destined for bed clothes, was filled with piles of coverings, sheets, mattresses, and pillows. Farther on were carpets, curtains, household utensils of all sorts; besides clothing, shoes, caps, for all conditions, for all ages. One could not believe, before visiting this bazaar, how little time and money were necessary to fill a cart with all that is necessary for the complete establishment of two or three families in want of everything.

Rodolphe was struck with the manner, at once pressing, officious, and cheerful, with which the shopkeepers, standing outside their shops, solicited the custom of the passers-by; these manners, stamped with a kind of respectful familiarity, seemed to belong to another age.

Hardly had he appeared in the grand passage, than he was pursued with the most seductive offers.

"Sir, come in here, and see my mattress; as good as new; I will rip open the corners; you shall see inside; you'll think it is lambs' wool, it's so soft and white." "My pretty little lady, I have sheets of the finest linen, better than new, for their first roughness is worn off; they are as pliable as a glove, strong as a warp of steel."

"My nice couple, do buy one of these coverings; do you see, it is soft, warm, and light; one would say it was made of down; it is nearly new, for it has not been used twenty times; come, my good lady, make your husband decided; give me your custom, I will sell very cheap; you shall be satisfied; you will come back and see Bouvard; you will find every thing in my shop; yesterday, I had a superb chance; you shall see; come in, then; I ask nothing to show my things."

"Faith," said Rodolphe to Rigolette, "this good old soul shall have the preference; she takes us for a young married couple: that flatters me—I decide for her shop."

"Agreed for the good old soul!" said Rigolette. "I fancy her also." The grisette and her companion entered the shop of Bouvard.

Through a magnanimity perhaps without example elsewhere than in the Temple, the rivals of Bouvard did not grumble at the preference shown to her; one of her neighbours carried her generosity so far as to say, "so long as it is Bouvard who has this windfall, good, she has a family, and is the honour of the Temple."

"Look here, my pretty little lady," said she to Rigolette, who examined several things with the eye of a connoisseur, "here is what I spoke of; two sets of bedclothes complete, as good as new. If by chance you should want a little old secretaire, not dear, here is one; I got it in the same lot. Although ordinarily I do not buy furniture, I could not refuse to take it; the person from whom I got all these things seemed so unhappy. Poor lady! It was, above all, the sale of this antiquity which seemed to make her heart bleed. It appears it was a family relic."

At these words, and while the old woman talked with Rigolette about the prices of different articles, Rodolphe examined more attentively the article which Bouvard had shown him.

It was one of those old fashioned secretaries of rosewood, of a form almost triangular, closed by a panel in front, which, when unfolded and sustained by two long supports of copper, served as a writing table. In the middle of this panel, ornamented with inlaid work of various coloured wood, Rodolphe remarked a cipher, incrusted with ebony, and composed of an M and R intertwined, surmounted by a coronet. He supposed that the last possessor of this piece of furniture belonged to the upper classes of society. His curiosity was redoubled; he looked at the secretaire with a new scrutiny; he mechanically opened the drawers, one after the other, when finding some difficulty with the last, and seeking the cause of this obstacle, he discovered and drew out with care a leaf of paper, which had slipped under the drawer.

While Rigolette was finishing her purchases, Rodolphe examined closely his discovery. Among the scratches which covered the paper, Rodolphe read what was evidently part of an unfinished letter.

"Sir—be persuaded that most fearful misfortunes could alone induce me to take this step. It is not pride misplaced which causes my scruples; it is the absolute want of any claim for the oldest shopkeeper, the longest established for the services I dare to ask you. The sight of my daughter, reduced like myself to the most fearful want, overcomes my embarrassment. A few words will suffice to inform you of the cause of the disasters which overwhelm me.

"After the death of my husband, I had for my fortune three hundred thousand francs placed by my brother with Mr. Jacques Ferrand, a notary. I received at Angers, where I had retired with my daughter, the interest of this sum through the hands of my brother. You know the frightful event that put an end to his days; ruined, as it appears by secret and unfortunate speculations, he killed himself eight months since. At the time of this fatal event, I received from him some desperate lines. When I should read them he wrote, he should exist no longer. He terminated this letter in informing me that he possessed no title relative to the sum placed in my name with Mr. Jacques Ferrand: that he never gave a receipt, for he was honour, piety, itself; it would suffice for me to present myself to him for this affair to be suitably regulated.

"As soon as it was possible for me to think of anything else than this frightful death of my brother, I came to Paris, where I knew no one but you, sir, and that indirectly by the relations which you had had with my husband. I have told you, that the sum deposited with Mr. Ferrand formed all my fortune; and my brother sent me every six months the interest of this money; more than a year had passed since the last payment. I presented myself to Mr. Ferrand to demand a revenue, of which I had the greatest need.

"Hardly had I named myself, than, without respect for my grief, he accused my brother of having borrowed from him two thousand francs which he lost by his death; adding, that his suicide was not only a crime before God and before man, but it was also an act of spoliation of which he, Mr. Ferrand, was a victim.

"This odious language aroused me; the probity of my brother was well known; he had, it is true, unknown to me and his friends, lost his fortune in hazardous speculations; but he was dead with a reputation intact, regretted by all, and leaving no debts save that of the notary.

"I answered Mr. Ferrand that I authorized him to take at once, from the money of mine which he had in charge, the two thousand francs which my brother owed him. At these words he regarded me with an air of surprise, and asked me what money I was talking about.

"'Of that which my brother placed with you eighteen months since, of which until now you have paid me the interest through him,' said I, not understanding his question.

"The notary shrugged his shoulders, smiled with pity, and answered that, far from having placed any money with him, my brother had borrowed from him two thousand francs. It is impossible to express to you my alarm at this answer. 'But what has become of this sum?' cried I. 'My daughter and myself have no other resource; if this is taken from us, there is nothing left us but the most abject poverty. What will become of us?'

"'I don't know,' answered the notary, coldly. 'It is probable that your brother, instead of placing this amount with me, has lost it in these speculations, which he carried on unknown to every one.'

"'It is false! it is infamous!' I cried. 'My brother was

honour itself. Far from robbing me and my daughter, he sacrificed himself for us. He would never marry that he might leave what he possessed to my child.'

"'Do you dare, then, to pretend, madame, that I am capable of denying a deposit which has been confided to me?' asked the notary, with indignation, which appeared so honourable and sincere, that I answered,—

"'No, surely not, sir; your reputation for probity is known; but I cannot, however, accuse my brother of such a cruel abuse of confidence.'

"'On what titles do you pretend to claim this of me?' asked Mr. Ferrand. 'On none, sir. Eighteen months since, my brother, who managed my affairs, wrote me: I have an excellent investment at six per cent.; send me your power of attorney to sell your rents; I shall deposit three hundred thousand francs with Mr. Ferrand, notary.' I sent my power to my brother; a few days after, he advised me that he had made the deposit with you, that you never gave a receipt, and at the end of six months he sent me the interest due.

"'And at least you have some letters from him on this subject, Madame?'

"'No, sir. They treated on business alone; I did not preserve them.'

"'I can, unfortunately, do nothing, madame,' answered the notary. 'If my probity was not above all suspicion, all doubt, I would say to you: The tribunals are open; attack me; the judges will have to choose between the word of an honourable man, who for thirty years enjoys the esteem of worthy people, and the posthumous declarations of a man who, after having ruined himself in the most mad speculations, has only found a refuge in suicide. I would say to you in short: Attack me, madame, if you dare, and the memory of your brother will be dishonoured. But I believe that you will have the good sense to resign yourself to a misfortune great, without doubt, but to which I am a stranger.'

"'But sir, I am a mother! if my fortune is taken from me, my daughter and myself have no other resource except our furniture—that sold, it is poverty, sir, frightful poverty!'

"'You have been duped; it is a misfortune; I cannot help it,' answered the notary. 'I left the notary more dead than

alive; what remained for me to do in this extremity? With no title to prove the validity of my claim, convinced of the probity of my brother, confounded by the assurance of Mr. Ferrand, having no one from whom I could ask advice (you were then travelling), knowing that it needed money to procure the opinion of lawyers, I dared not undertake such a process. Then it was—'"

This piece of a letter stopped here; for scribblings not to be deciphered covered some lines which still remained; finally; at the bottom in a corner, Rodolphe read this kind of memorandum:—

"WRITE TO THE DUCHESS DE LUCENAY."

Rodolphe remained thoughtful after reading this fragment of a letter. Although the new infamy of which it seemed to accuse Jacques Ferrand was not proved, this man had shown himself so devoid of pity towards the unfortunate Morel, so infamous towards Louise, his daughter, that a denial of a deposit, protected by certain impunity, could hardly be astonishing on his part.

This mother, who reclaimed a fortune which had so strangely disappeared, was without doubt accustomed to a competency. Ruined by a sudden blow, knowing no one at Paris, what must have become of these two women, stripped of everything, alone in this immense city? Rodolphe had, as we know, promised some intrigues to Madame d'Harville. He thought that perhaps chance might put him in the way of some worthy unfortunate, who could, according to his project, interest her heart and imagination.

The draft of a letter which he held in his hand, a copy of which had doubtless been sent to the person of whom she had implored assistance, announced a proud and resigned character, to whom the offer of alms would doubtless be revolting. How many precautions then, how many twistings, how many delicate "ruses" to conceal the source of a generous assistance, or to make her accept it!

And, besides, how much address to obtain admittance to the dwelling of this person, so as to judge whether she really deserved commiseration or not! Rodolphe foresaw a crowd of new emotions, curious and touching, which must singularly *amuse* Madame d'Harville, as he had promised her.

"Well! my *husband*," said Rigolette gaily to Rodolphe, "what is that scrap of paper that you are reading there?" "My little

wife," answered Rodolphe, "you are very curious! I will tell you by-and-by. Have you finished your purchases?" "Certainly, and your protégées will be fixed like kings. Now you have only to pay. Madame Bouvard is easy to deal with—we must be just." "My little *wife*, an idea! While I pay, if you would go and choose clothes for Madame Morel and her children? I acknowledge my ignorance on the subject of purchases. You will have them sent here: we will make but one journey, and our poor folks will thus have all at once."

"You are always right, my *husband*. Wait for me, I shan't be long. I know two shops where I am a regular customer; I will find there all I want." And Rigolette went out. But she returned to say:—

"Madame Bouvard, I confide my *husband* to you; don't you look sweet at him, at least!" Another laugh, and she disappeared.

CHAPTER XIII.

DISCOVERY.

"I MUST acknowledge, sir," said Bouvard to Rodolphe, after the departure of Rigolette, "that you have there a famous little manager. She understands how to buy; and besides, ain't she pretty! red and white, with large, fine, black eyes, and hair of the same colour." "Is she not charming, and am I not a fortunate husband, Madame Bouvard?" "As fortunate a husband as she is a wife, I am very sure."

"You are not deceived: but tell me how much I owe you?

"Your little manager would not give more than three hundred and thirty francs for all. As I'm alive, I make but thirteen francs, for I have not bought these things as cheap as usual. I had not the heart to bargain for them; the people who sold them appeared too unhappy."

"Truly? Are these the same persons from whom you also bought this little secretaire?" "Yes, sir; ah! stop; that breaks my heart only to think of it! Just imagine that the day before yesterday there came here a lady still young and handsome, but so pale, so thin, that it gave one pain to see her. Although she was, as one would say, very neat in her appearance, her old rusty black shawl, her dress also black, and decayed, her straw hat in

the month of January (she was in mourning) announced what we call genteel poverty, for I am sure that she is a lady—well, she asked me, blushing, if I wished to buy two sets of bedclothes, and a little old secretaire; I answered that, since I sold I must buy; that if it suited me, it was a settled affair; but that I should wish to see the things. She begged me to come home with her, not far from here, the other side of the Boulevard, to a house on the quay of the Canal Saint Martin. I left my shop in charge of my niece; I followed the lady; we arrived at a house for 'small folks,' as we say, right at the bottom of the court; we went up the fourth story, the lady knocked, a young girl of fourteen came to open the door; she was also in mourning, and also very pale and thin; but in spite of that, beautiful as the morning; so beautiful that I remained speechless." "And this handsome young girl?"

"Was the daughter of the lady in mourning." "Notwithstanding the cold, a poor dress of black and white cotton, and a little black shawl, well worn, was all she had on." "Just figure to yourself, sir, two rooms very clean, but very empty, icy enough to freeze one to death; in the first place there was the fireplace, where not a spark was to be seen; there had been no fire there for a long time. As for furniture, two beds, two chairs, a commode, an old trunk, and the little secretaire; on the trunk, a bundle in a handkerchief. This little bundle, it was all that remained to the mother and daughter, their furniture once sold. The landlord took the two bedsteads, chairs, trunk, and table, for what was due to him, as the porter told me as he came up with us. Then this lady begged me honestly to value the mattresses, sheets, curtains, and blankets. On the faith of an honest woman, sir, although my trade is to buy cheap, and sell dear, when I saw this young lady with her eyes full of tears, and her mother, in spite of her 'sang froid,' looked as if she was weeping within, I valued the things at fifteen francs more than I should have done, and this I swear to you. I even consented to take this little secretaire, to oblige them, although it is not in my line." "I will buy it, Madame Bouvard."

"So much the better; it would have remained a long time on my hands. I told her, then, what I would give for these things. I expected she would have bargained, asked more. Ah, yes! it was thus again I saw she was no common person; genteel poverty, you may be certain! I said then, 'It is so much.' She

answered, 'it is well; let us return to your shop, you will pay me, for I shall never return to this house.' Then she said to her daughter, who wept, seated on the trunk, 'Claire, take the bundle.' The young lady got up; but on passing near the little secretaire, she threw herself on her knees before it, and began to sob. 'Courage, my child, we are observed,' said the mother, in an under tone, which did not prevent me from hearing her. You conceive, sir, these are poor people, but as proud as that. When the lady gave me the key of the little secretaire, I saw also a tear in her inflamed eye; her heart seemed to bleed at parting with this old piece of furniture, but she tried to be calm and dignified before strangers. In short, she told the porter that I would come and take all but what the landlord kept, and we returned here, the young lady giving her arm to her mother, and carrying in her hand the little bundle containing all they possessed. I paid them their money, and I have not seen them since." "But their names?"

"I do not know; the lady sold me these things in the presence of the porter; I had no need to ask her name." "But their new address?" "I do not know this either." "I suppose they know it at their old lodgings?" "No, sir; when I returned there to get my things, the porter said, in speaking of them, 'they were very quiet people, very respectable, and very unfortunate; I hope no evil will happen to them! They appear to be very calm, but at the bottom, I am sure they are in a state of desperation.' And where are they going to lodge at this hour? I asked him, 'In truth, I don't know,' he answered; 'they have gone without telling me; very certain they will never return."

The hopes that Rodolphe had for a moment conceived vanished. How to discover these two unfortunate females? having for guide only the name of Claire, and this fragment of a letter, on which was these words, "Write to the Duchess de Lucenay." The sole and feeble chance of finding the traces of these unfortunates rested on Madame de Lucenay, happily of the circle of Madame d'Harville. "Here, madame, pay yourself," said Rodolphe, handing her a note for five hundred francs. "I will give you the change, sir."

"Where shall we find a cart to carry our effects?"

"If it is not too far, a handbarrow will answer; there is one belonging to Jerome, close at hand: what is your address?"

"Rue du Temple, No. 17." "Oh! well, well, I know where it is!" "You have been in this house?"

"Several times; in the first place, I have bought clothes of a pawnbroker who lives there; it is true, I dont't like her trade, but that is none of my business; she sells, I buy; we are quits. Another time, not six weeks since, I went there for the furniture of a young man, who lived on the fourth floor, and who was breaking up." "Mr. François Germain, perhaps?" cried Rodolphe. "Exactly; you know him?" "Very well; unfortunately, he has not left his new address at the Rue du Temple, and I don't know where to find him. "If that's all, I can tell you." "You know where he lives?" "Not exactly, but I know where you will be be sure to find him."

"And where's that?" "At the notary's, where he works." "A notary?" "Yes, who lives in the Rue du Sentier." "Mr. Jacques Ferrand!" cried Rodolphe. "Himself a very holy man; there is a crucifix and holy-box in his study; it smells just like a sacristy." "But how did you find out that Mr. Germain wrote at the notary's?" "It is quite a story. This yonng man came to propose to me to buy his furniture in a lot. This time, again, although it is not my business, I bought all, and afterward sold it here; since it was agreeable to the young man, I did not wish to refuse. I bought all then—good; I paid him—good; he was, no doubt, satisfied, for at the end of fifteen days he returned to buy some bedclothes. A porter, with his cart, came with him; they bundled all together—good; but just as he was going to pay, he perceived he had forgotten his purse. He looked like such an honest young man, that I said to him, 'Take away these things, never mind, I'll call at your lodgings for the money.' 'Very well,' said he, 'but I am never at home; come to-morrow, Rue du Sentier, at Mr. Ferrand's, notary, where I am employed, I will pay you.' I went there the next day; he payed me; only, what I thought droll was, that he should sell and buy again, all in fifteen days." Rodolphe imagined the reason of this singularity: Germain wished that all traces of him should be lost to the wretches who pursued him. He was overjoyed thinking of the happiness of Madame Georges, who was about to see again this son, so long and so vainly searched for. Rigolette soon returned, her eyes sparkling, and with a smiling face.

"Well! when I told you so," cried she, "I was not mistaken.

We have spent in all six hundred and forty francs, and the Morels will be established like princes. Look—look—see the shopkeepers coming. Are they not laden? Nothing is wanting, every thing is needful, even to a gridiron, two fine saucepans, and a coffee-pot: I said to myself, 'Since they wish things done wholesale, let us do them wholesale;' but pay quickly, my neighbour, and let us go. It is almost noon; and it must needs that my needle should travel at a famous rate to make up for this morning!" Rodolphe paid, and left the Temple with Rigolette. • • • • • •

CHAPTER XIV.

APPARITION.

At the moment that the grisette and her companion entered in the alley of their house, they were almost overturned by Madame Pipelet, who ran against them, troubled, bewildered, lost. "Ah, my God!" said Rigolette. "What is the matter then, Madame Pipelet? "Where are you runing to?" "Is it you, Mademoiselle Rigolette," cried Anastasia. "Aid me to save Alfred's life.' "What do you say?" "The poor old darling has fainted, have pity on us! run and get two sous worth of absinthe at the chemists—the strongest—it is his remedy when he is indisposed. Indigestion, perhaps; it will bring him too; be charitable, do not refuse me; I will return to Alfred." Rigolette dropped Rodolphe's arm and ran to the chemists. "But what has happened, Madame Pipelet?" asked Rodolphe, following the porteress, who returned to the lodge.

"I don't know, my worthy sir. I had gone to the mayor's, to the church, and to the tavern, to save Alfred these trots. I came back; what do I see? the old darling kneeled up! Look, Mr. Rodolphe," said Anastasia, opening the door of her den; "see if it is not enough to break one's heart! Lamentable spectacle;" regarding Pipelet, who was seated on the ground, with his back against the foot of his bed. The fainting fit had passed away; Alfred began to make some slight signs with his hands, as if he wished to repulse some one or something; then he tried to rid himself of his beaver.

"He kicks! it is a good sign! he comes to;" cried the porteress, and, stooping down, she screamed in his ears, "What is the mat-

ter, my Alfred? It is your Stasia who is here. How do you feel? They have gone for some absinthe; that'll bring you on your feet." Then assuming a soft and most caressing voice, she added, "Have they, then, wounded, assassinated the dear old darling?"

Alfred uttered a profound sigh, and allowed to escape from him in the shape of a groan, this prophetic word: "Cabrion!"

And his trembling hands seemed anew to repulse a frightful vision.

"Cabrion! this beggar of a painter again!" cried Madame Pipelet. "Alfred dreamed so much about him last night, that he almost kicked me to death. This monster is his nightmare! Not only he empoisons his days, but he empoisons his nights; he pursues him in his sleep; yes, sir, as if he was a criminal; and that this Cabrion, whom the devil confound! was his bitter conscience.' Rodolphe smiled discreetly, anticipating some new joke of the former neighbour of Rigolette. "Alfred! answer me; don't be dumb; you frighten me," said Madame Pipelet; "come, be yourself again; why do you think of that bully; you know very well that, when you think of him, it has the same effect that cabbage has upon you—it rests on your stomach, and that suffocates you.''

"Cabrion! repeated Pipelet, raising with an effort his hat from off his eyes, which he rolled around him with a bewildered look.

Rigolette came in, bringing a little bottle of absinthe.

"Thank you, mademoiselle, you are very kind!" said the old woman; and then she added, "Here, old darling, sip this for me, it will bring you up again." And Anastasia, placing quickly the bottle to the lips of the Pipelet, undertook to make him swallow the absinthe.

Alfred would have contested vigorously, but his wife, profiting by the weakness of her victim, held his head with a firm hand, and with the other introduced the neck of the bottle between his teeth, and forced him to drink; after which she cried triumphantly, "Come, now? there you are again on your legs, old darling!" In effect, Alfred, after having wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, opened his eyes, arose, and asked, in a frightened tone,

"Have you seen him?" "Who?" "Is he gone?"

"But who? Alfred!" "Cabrion!" "Has he dared!" cried the porteress. Pipelet, as mute as the statue of the commander in Don Giovanni, nodded, like the spectre, twice in the affirmative.

"Has Cabrion been here?" asked Rigolette, restraining a violent

desire to laugh. "This monster, is he not let loose after Alfred?" cried Madame Pipelet; "oh, if I had been here with my broom, he should have eaten it, handle and all. But speak then, Alfred; tell your misfortunes!"

Pipelet made a sign with his hand that he was about to speak.

He was listened to in religious silence; he expressed himself as follows, in a voice profoundly affected: "My wife had just left me to spare to me the fatigue, of going according to your commands, (bowing to Rodolphe), to the mayor's, the church, and the tavern." "The old darling has had the nightmare all night." "I preferred to go myself," said Anastasia.

"This nightmare was sent me as a warning from above," answered the porter, religiously. "I had dreamed of Cabrion. I should suffer from Cabrion, The day had commenced by an attack on the body of my wife." "Alfred, Alfred, hush, now! this makes me feel ashamed before everybody," said Madame Pipelet, mincing, bridling, and casting down her eyes as if ashamed. "I thought I had paid my debt of misfortune to this day of misfortune, after the departure of the luxurious malefactors," continued Pipelet, "when oh! my God!"

"Come, Alfred, courage!" "I will have it," answered Pipelet, heroically: "It is necessary; I will have it. I was then seated tranquilly at my table, reflecting on a change which I wished to operate on the upper leather of this boot, confided to my industry, when I heard a noise—a slight rubbing on the window of my lodge. Was it a presentiment? A notice from above? My heart ceased to beat. I raised my head, and through the glass I saw—I saw—"

"Cabrion!" cried Anastasia, clasping her hands.

"Cabrion," answered Pipelet, gloomily. "His hideous face was there, plastered against the window, looking at me with his cat eyes. What did I say? Tigers, just as in my dream. I wished to speak; my tongue clove to my mouth. I tried to get up. I stuck to my seat; my boot fell from my hands; and, as in all the critical and important events of my life, I remained immovable. Then the key turned in the lock, the door opened,—Cabrion entered." "He entered! What boldness," cried Madame Pipelet, as much astounded as her husband at this audacity. "He entered slowly," continued Alfred, "stopped a moment at the door, as if to fascinate me with his atrocious glance: then

he advanced towards me, stopping at each step, piercing me with his eye, without saying a word, straight dumb, menacing as a phantom."

"It makes my hair stand on end," said Anastasia.

"I remained more and more immovable and seated on my chair. Cabrion still advanced slowly, keeping his eye on me like a snake on a bird; for he caused me no fear, and yet in spite of myself I looked at him. He came close to me. I could no longer support his revolting aspect; it was too much, I could not stand it. I shut my eyes. Then I felt that he dared to put his hands on my hat; he took it by the crown, took it slowly from my head, and left it bare. I began to be seized with a vertigo; my respiration was suspended: my ears began to sing. I was more and more stuck fast to my seat. I shut my eyes tighter and tighter. Then Cabrion stooped down, took my bald head—that I have the right, or, rather, had the right to call venerable, before this outrage—he took, then, my head between his cold hands, cold as the dead! and on my forehead, glazed with sweat, he imprinted a brazen kiss; the lascivious wretch."

Anastasia threw her arms towards heaven. "My most mortal enemy to come and kiss me on the forehead; to force me to submit to his disgusting caresses, after having odiously persecuted me for a lock of my hair. Such a monstrosity made me think deeply, and paralyzed me. Cabrion profited by my stupor to place my hat on my head, then with a blow he pushed it over my eyes, as you have seen. This last outrage upset me: the measure was full; everything went round, and I fainted at the moment when I saw him, from under my hat, go out of the lodge as tranquilly and slowly as he had entered it." Then, as if this recital had exhausted his strength, Mr. Pipelet fell back on his chair, raising his hands towards heaven in an attitude of mute imprecation.

Rigolette went out hastily; her courage was at an end; her desire to laugh exhausted her; she could restrain herself no longer.

Rodolphe had himself, with difficulty, retained his composure.

All at once a confused noise, which announced the arrival of a crowd, resounded in the street; a great tumult was heard at the door of the alley, and soon the sound of muskets rang on the pavement of the door.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ARREST.

"My God! Mr. Rodolphe," cried Rigolette, running in pale and trembling, "there is a police officer and a guard here."

"Divine justice watches over me," said Pipelet, in a burst of religious gratitude; "they come to arrest Cabrion; unfortunately it is too late." A police officer entered the lodge. His countenance was grave and severe. "Officer, it is too late; the malefactor has escaped," said Pipelet, sadly; "but I can give you his description: an atrocious smile; impudent stare; manners." "Of whom do you speak?" asked the officer. "Of Cabrion. But by making haste, perhaps you will catch him," answered Pipelet. "I do not know who Cabrion is," said the officer, impatiently. "One Jerome Morel, journeyman jeweller, does he live in this house?"

"Yes, sir," said Madame Pipelet. "Conduct me to his room."

"Morel, the workman!" answered the porteress, much surprised; "but he is a real lamb; he is incapable."

"Jerome Morel, does he live here or not?" "He lives here, with his family, in a garret." "Conduct me to this garret."

Then, speaking to a man who accompanied him, he said:

"Let the two municipal guards wait here, and send Justin for a hack. Now, conduct me to the Morels." "If it is all the same to you, I will take Alfred's place; he is indisposed from the assaults of Cabrion, who, like cabbage, sits heavy on the stomach." "You or your husband, no matter which. Come." And, preceded by Madame Pipelet, he began to mount the stairs; but he soon stopped, seeing he was followed by Rodolphe and Rigolette. "Who are you? what do you want?" asked he.

"They are the two lodgers of the fourth story," answered Madame Pipelet. "I beg pardon, I did not know that you belonged to the house," said he to Rodolphe.

He, arguring well from the polite manners of the officer, said to him, "You are going to see a desperate family, sir. I do not know what new blow menaces this unhappy artisan, but he has been cruelly tried this night. One of his daughters, already overcome by illness, is dead—under his eyes—of cold and misery."

"Can it be possible?" "It is the truth," said Madame Pipe-

let. "Except for the gentleman who now speaks to you, and who is the prince of lodgers, since he has saved, by his benefactions, the poor Morel from prison, all the family of the artisan would be dead with hunger." The officer regarded Rodolphe with as much interest as surprise. "Nothing is more simple," he answered. "A very charitable lady, knowing that Morel, whose honour and probity I'll answer for, was in a condition as deplorable as it was unmerited, has charged me to pay a note for which the bailiffs were about to drag to prison this poor workman, sole support of a numerous family."

In his turn, struck with the noble features of Rodolphe, and with the dignity of his manners, the officer replied, "I do not doubt the honesty of Morel; I regret only that I have to fulfil a painful duty before you, who are so much interested in the family."

"What do you mean?" "I avow to you, sir, it is the arrest of Louise Morel that is in question."

The rouleau of gold that she had offered to the bailiffs came to the mind of Rodolphe. "Of what is she accused?" "She is accused of infanticide." "She; she; Oh! her poor father." "From what you have told me, I conceive that, under the circumstances in which the artisan is placed, this new blow will be terrible to him. Unfortunately, I must obey my orders." "But it is only a simple accusation," cried Rodolphe. "The proofs are wanting, without doubt?" "I cannot explain myself farther on this subject. Justice has been informed of this crime, or, rather, the presumption, by the declarations of a man in every way respectable—the master of Louise Morel."

"Jacques Ferrand, the notary!" said Rodolphe, indignantly.

"Yes, Sir. But why this vivacity?" "Jacques Ferrand is a scoundrel!" "I see with pain that you do not know of whom you speak. Jacques Ferrand is the most honourable man in the world; of most exemplary piety, and known probity." "I repeat to you, sir, that the notary is a scoundrel." He wished to imprison Morel, because his daughter repulsed his infamous propositions. If Louise is only accused on the testimony of such a man —acknowledge, sir, it merits but little belief."

"It does not belong to me, sir, and it does not suit me to discuss the value of the testimony of Mr. Ferrand," said the officer, coldly. "Justice has taken cognizance of the affair; the tribu-

nals will decide. As to me, I have orders to arrest Louise Morel, and I shall do it."

"You are right. I regret that a movement of indignation, perhaps legitimate, has made me forget that this is neither the time nor place for such a discussion. One word alone; the body of the child he has lost is in the garret. I have offered my room to this family, to spare them the sad sight of the corpse: it is, then, probably in my chamber you will find the artisan and his daughter. I conjure you, in the name of humanity, do not arrest Louise suddenly in the midst of these misfortunes. Morel has gone through so many shocks this night that his reason will give way; his wife is also dangerously sick—such a blow will kill her. If you will permit me, I'll ask you a favour. The young girl who follows us with the porteress occupies a room adjoining mine; I do not doubt but that she will place it at your disposal. You can at first send for Louise; then, if it must be, for Morel, that his daughter may bid him farewell. You will at least spare a poor, sick, and infirm mother a heart-rending scene." "If this can be arranged so, willingly." This conversation had taken place in an under tone, while Rigolette and Madame Pipelet held themselves discreetly at some distance off. Rodolphe descended and said to the former, "My poor neighbour, I must ask another favour: you must let me have your room at my disposal for an hour." "As long as you please, Mr. Rodolphe. You have my key. But, my God! what is the matter, then?" "I will tell you directly. This is not all: you must be kind enough to return to the Temple, to tell them to delay sending home our purchases for an hour." "Willingly, Mr. Rodolphe; but is there a new misfortune happened to the Morels?"

"Alas! yes; you will only know it too soon."

"Come, my neighbour, I fly to the temple. My God? I, who, thanks to you—thought them out of trouble," said the grisette, and she descended rapidly the stairs.

Rodolphe wished to spare Rigolette the sad spectacle of the arrest of Louise, "My good officer," said Madame Pipelet, "since my prince of lodgers accompanies you, I can go and find Alfred, he alarms me; he has hardly recovered from his indisposition of—Cabrion."

"Go; go;" said the officer; and he remained alone with Rodolphe. Both arrived on the fourth landing place, opposite the

door of the room where the artisan and his family were temporarily placed.

Suddenly this door was opened. Louise, pale, and weeping, came out quickly. "Adieu, my father," cried she; "I will return; I must go now." "Louise, my child, listen to me, then," answered Morel, following his daughter, and trying to detain her. At the sight of Rodolphe and the officer, they remained immovable.

"Ah, you, our deliverer!" said the artisan, recognising Rodolphe; "aid me, then, to prevent Louise going. I do not know what is the matter with her; she makes me afraid; she wishes to go away. Is it not so, sir, that she must not return any more to her master? Did you not say, 'Louise shall quit you no more; this shall be your recompense.' Oh! at this delightful promise, I avow it, for a moment I had forgotten the death of my poor little Adèle; but to be separated from you, Louise, never!" Rodolphe felt himself overcome; he had not the strength to utter a word. The officer said, severely, to Louise, "Do you call yourself Louise Morel?" "Yes," answered the young girl, amazed. Rodolphe had opened the chamber of Rigolette. "You are Jérome Morel, her father?" added the officer, addressing the artisan.

"Yes, sir; but—" "Enter there, with your daughter." And the officer pointed to the chamber of Rigolette, where Rodolphe already was. Reassured by his presence, the artisan and Louise, astonished and troubled, obeyed; the officer shut the door, and said to Morel, with emotion, "I know your honesty and misfortunes; it is, then, with regret, I inform you, that in the name of the law, I come to arrest your daughter." "All is discovered; I am lost," cried Louise, throwing herself into the arms of her father.

"What do you say?" said Morel, stupified. "Are you mad? Why lost? Arrest you! why arrest you? who will arrest you?" "I; in the name of the law." And the officer showed his scarf. "Oh, unfortunate! unfortunate that I am!" cried Louise, falling on her knees.

"How, in the name of the law!" said the artisan, whose mind began to wander; "why arrest my daughter in the name of the law? I answer for Louise; I; she is my daughter, my worthy daughter; is it not true, Louise? How, arrrest you, when our

guardian angel restores you to us, to console us for the death of of my little Adèle? Come, now, it cannot be. And, besides, sir, speaking with respect, only criminals are arrested, do you understand? and Louise, my daughter, is not a criminal. Very sure, do you see, my child, this gentleman is mistaken. My name is Morel; there are more Morels besides me. You are called Louise; there are more of the same name. That's it, do you see, sir? there is a mistake."

"Unfortunately, there is no mistake. Louise Morel, say farewell to your father." "You carry away my daughter; you!" cried the workman, furious from grief, and advancing towards the officer with a threatening air. Rodolphe seized him by the arm, and said, "Calm yourself, and hope; your daughter shall be returned to you; her innocence shall be proved; she is, doubtless, not culpable." "Culpable of what? She can be culpable of nothing. I would place my hand in the fire, that—" Then recollecting the gold that Louise had brought to pay the note, Morel cried, "But this money! this money, Louise?" and he cast on his daughter a terrible look. Louise understood it. "I steal!" cried she, and her cheeks coloured with generous indignation; her tone of voice, her gesture, satisfied her father: "I knew it. Do you see, sir; she denies it; and never in her life has she lied. I swear it to you. Ask every one who knows her, and they will say the same. She lie! Ah, well; yes; she is too proud for that; besides, the bill was paid by our benefactor. This gold, she don't want it; she was going to return it to the person who lent it; is it not so, Louise?"

"Your daughter is not accused of theft," said the officer.

"But, my God! what is she accused of, then? I, her father, I swear that whatever she is accused of, she is innocent; and, in my life, also, I have never lied." "What good will it do to know what she is accused of?" said Rodolphe to him; "her innocence shall be proved; the person who interests herself so much in you will protect your daughter. Come, courage. This time, again, Providence will not fail you. Embrace your daughter; you will soon see her again." "Officer," cried Morel, without listening to Rodolphe, "a daughter is not taken away from a father without, at least, telling him of what she is accused. I wish to know all. Louise, will you speak?" "Your daughter is accused of—infanticide," said the officer. "I—I—do not

comprehend—I—you—" "Your daughter is accused of having killed her child," said the officer, much overcome at this scene. But it is not yet proved that she has committed this crime."

"Oh, no; it is not so, sir; it is not so," cried Louise, with force, and raising herself up. "I swear to you it was dead. It breathed no more; it was frozen; I lost all consciousness; that is my crime. But to kill my child, oh, never?" "Your child, wretch?" cried Morel, as if he wished to annihilate her with this gesture and terrible imprecation. "Pardon, my father," cried she. After a moment of frightful silence, Morel went on with a calmness still more frightful.

"Take away this creature; she is not my child."

He wished to go out; Louise threw herself at his knees, which she embraced with both arms, and with face upward, frantic, and supplicating, she cried, "My father; listen to me only; listen to me."

"Officer, take her away, then; I abandon her to you," said the artisan, making every effort to disengage himself from the embraces of Louise.

"Listen to her," said Rodolphe, stopping him; "do not be, now, without pity." "She! my God! she!" repeated Morel, burying his face in his hands, "she dishonoured! oh, infamous!" "And if she is dishonoured to save you?" whispered Rodolphe. These words made a startling impression on Morel; he looked at his weeping child, still kneeling at his feet; then interrogating her with a look impossible to describe, he cried, in a hollow voice, his teeth grinding with rage, "The notary?"

An answer came to the lips of Louise. She was about to speak, but, on reflection, she stopped, bent her head, and remained silent.

"But no; he wished to imprison me this morning," continued Morel: "it is not he; but, so much the better, she has no excuse for her fault; I can curse her without remorse." "No, no; do not curse me, my father; to you I will tell all; to you alone; and you will see—you will see if I do not deserve your pardon." "Listen to her for the sake of pity," said Rodolphe. "What can she tell me? her infamy? it will soon be public; I will wait."

"Sir," cried Louise to the officer, "in mercy, let me say a few words to my father before leaving him, perhaps, for ever. And

before you, also, our deliverer, I will speak; but only before you and my father." "I consent," said the officer.

"Will you, then, be insensible? Will you refuse this last consolation to your child?" asked Rodolphe. "If you think you owe me some return for the favours I have directed towards you, grant the prayer of your daughter. After a moment of mournful silence, Morel answered, "Let us go." "But where shall we go?" asked Rodolphe; your family is in the next room." "Where shall we go?" cried the artisan, with bitter irony, "where shall we go? up there; up there, in the garret, alongside of the body of my child. The place is well chosen for this confession, is it not? Come; we will see if Louise will dare to lie in the sight of the body of her sister. Come." And Morel went out, precipitately, with a wild stare, without looking at Louise.

"Sir," whispered the officer to Rodolphe, "do not prolong this interview. You said, truly, his reason would not sustain it; just now, his look was that of a madman." "Alas! I fear, like you, a terrible and new misfortune; I will shorten, as much as possible, the touching adieu." And Rodolphe rejoined the artisan and his daughter.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CONFESSION.

Dark and gloomy spectacle!

In the middle of the garret, such as we have described it, reposed, on the couch of the idiot, the corpse of the little child. An old piece of sheet covered it. Rodolphe, standing with his back to the wall, was painfully affected. Morel, seated on his workbench, his head down, hands hanging, his looks fixed, wild, were constantly fixed on the bed where reposed the remains of the little Adèle.

At this sight, the anger, the indignation of the artisan became weaker, and changed into a sadness of inexpressible bitterness; his energy abandoned him; he sank under this new blow. Louise, of mortal paleness, felt her strength fail her. The revelation that she was about to make frightened her. Yet she took, tremblingly, the hand of her father; that poor, thin hand, deformed by excess of labour.

He did not withdraw it. Then his daughter, bursting into tears

covered it with kisses, and soon felt it press lightly against her lips The anger of Morel had ceased; his tears, for a long time retained, flowed at last. "My father, if you knew—if you knew how much I am to be pitied." "Oh, stop: you see this will be the grief of all my life, Louise—of all my life," answered the artisan, weeping. "You, my God! you in prison, on the criminal bench; you, so proud: when you had the right to be so. No," continued he, in a new excess of grief, "no! I should prefer to see you under the winding sheet alongside of your poor little sister." "And I also I wish it were so," answered Louise. "Hush, unfortunate child, you give me pain. I was wrong to say that: I went too far. Come, speak, but, in the name of God, tell the truth. However frightful it may be, tell me all. If I hear it from you it will appear less cruel to me. Speak: alas, our moments are counted; you are waited for. Oh: the sad, sad parting, just heaven!" "My father, I will tell you all," said Louise, resolutely: but promise me, and you, our benefactor, promise also, not to repeat this to any one. If he knew that I had spoken, do you see: oh, you would be lost: lost like me; for you do not know the power and ferocity of this man." "Of what man?" "My master." "The notary?"

"Yes," said Louise, in a low tone, and looking around her, as if she were overheard. "Compose yourself," answered Rodolphe. "This man is cruel and powerful; no matter: we will combat him. Besides, if I reveal what you are about to tell us, it will be only in your interest, or in that of your father."

"And I also, Louise, if I speak, it will be to try to save you. But what has he done, this wicked man?" "This is not all," said Louise, after a moment's reflection, "in this sad tale it will be questioned if some one who has rendered me a great service; who has been for my father and for our family full of kindness: this person was employed at Mr. Ferrand's when I went: I have sworn not to mention the name."

Rodolphe, thinking she meant Germain, said,

"If you mean François Germain, be easy; his secret will be kept by your father and myself."

Louise looked at Rodolphe with surprise. "You know him" said she. "How! the good and excellent young man who lived here for three months, and was employed at the notary's when you went there?" said Morel. "The first time you saw him here you appeared not to know him.' "That was agreed upon between us.

He had grave reasons to conceal that he worked for Mr. Ferrand. It was I who told him of the chamber on the fourth story, knowing he would be a good neighbour to you." "But," said Rodolphe, "who placed your daughter with the notary?" "When my wife was taken sick, I had said to Madame Burette, the pawnbroker, who lives here, that Louise wished to go to service to aid us. Madame Burette, knew the housekeeper of the notary; she gave me a letter to her, in which she strongly recommended Louise. Cursed, cursed be that letter; it has caused all our misfortunes. So this is the way my daughter went there." "Although I am informed of some of the facts which have caused the hatred of Ferrand towards your father," said Rodolphe to Louise, "I beg you will relate to me in a few words what passed between you and the notary since you entered his service. This may serve to defend you."

"During the first months of my stay at Mr. Ferrand's I had no reason to complain of him. I had much work to do; the housekeeper was often very rough towards me; the house was gloomy; but I endured all with patience; servitude is servitude, otherwise I should have had other disagreements. Mr. Ferrand had a stern look. He went to mass; he often received priests. I did not mistrust him. At first he hardly looked at me. He spoke very cross to me; above all in the presence of strangers.

"Except the porter who lodged in that part of the building where the office is, I was the only domestic with Madame Seraphin, the housekeeper. The building we occupied was an old isolated ruin, between the court and garden. My chamber was quite up to the top. Very often I was afraid to remain alone all the evening, either in the kitchen, which was under ground, or in my chamber. In the night, I sometimes thought I heard extraordinary noises in the room under mine, which no one occupied, and where Germain alone often came to work during the day. Two of the windows of this story were walled up, and one of the doors very thick, was strengthened with bars of iron. The housekeeper told me afterward that Mr. Ferrand kept his strong box there.

"One night I had sat up very late to finish some mending, which was very urgent; I was about to go to bed, when I heard some one walking very softly in the corridor at the end of which was my chamber; they stopped at my door: at first I thought it was the housekeeper, but as she did not come in, it made me afraid; I dared not to stir; I listened; no one stirred; I was how-

ever, sure there was some one behind the door; I asked twice who was there—no one answered. More and more alarmed, I pushed my commode against the door, which had neither lock nor bolt. I still listened—nothing stirred; at the end of half an hour, which "appeared very long, I threw myself on the bed; the night passed tranquilly. The next morning I asked the housekeeper for permission to put a bolt on my door, as there was no lock, relating to her my fears of the last night; she answered that I had dreamed, that I must speak to Mr. Ferrand about it; at my demand he shrugged his shoulders and told me I was a fool; I did not dare to say anything more.

"Some time after this, happened the affair of the diamond. My father, almost desperate, knew not what to do. I related his trouble to Madame Seraphin; she answered, my master, is so charitable, that perhaps he will do something for your father.' The same evening I waited at table; Mr. Ferrand said to me, bluntly, 'Your father has need of thirteen hundred francs; go this night and tell him to come to my office to-morrow; he shall have the money. He is an honest man, and deserves that one should interest himself for him.' At this act of kindness I burst into tears: I did not know how to thank my master; he said to me, in his ordinary rough manner, 'It is well; what I have done is very simple.' In the evening I came to tell the good news to my father, and the next day—" "I had the money, against a bill of three months date, accepted in blank, by me," said Morel. 'I did like Louise; I wept with gratitude; I called him my benefactor. Oh! he must needs have been very wicked to destroy the gratitude and veneration I vowed to him."

"The precaution to make you sign a bill in blank, at such a date that you could not pay it, did not awaken your suspicions?" asked Rodolphe. "No, sir; I thought the notary only took it for security; besides, he told me I need not think of paying it under two years; every three months it should be renewed for the sake of being regular; yet at the end of the first term, it was presented, and not being paid, he obtained a judgment, against me under another name; but he told me not to be troubled, that it was an error of his clerk." "He wished thus to have you in his power," said Rodolphe.

"Alas! yes, sir; for it was from the date of this judgment he began to—" "But continue." Louise, continued. "I do not know where

I am. My head turns. I shall become mad! it is too much—too much." Rodolphe soothed him, and Louise continued; "I redoubled my zeal to show my gratitude. The housekeeper then held me in great aversion; she often injured me by not repeating the orders that Mr. Ferrand gave her for me; I suffered from this, and would have preferred another place; but the obligation of my father to my master prevented my leaving. It was now three months since he had lent the money; he continued to scold me before Madame Seraphin, yet he looked at me sometimes, behind her back, in such a manner as to embarrass me, and he smiled in seeing me blush." "You comprehend, sir, he was then about to obtain a judgment against me." "One day," continued Louise, "the housekeeper went out after dinner, as was her custom; the clerks had left the office; they lodged elsewhere. Mr. Ferrand sent the porter on an errand; I remained in the house alone with my master; I was working in the antechamber; he rang for me. I entered his room; he was standing before the fireplace; I drew near; he turned quickly, and took me by the arm. I was alarmed, I ran into the antechamber and shut the door holding it with all my strength: the key was on his side." "You understand sir. You hear," said Morel to Rodolphe, "the conduct of this worthy benefactor." "At the end of a few moments the door yielded to his efforts," coutinued Louise. "I blew out the light—he called me. I made no answer. He then said in a voice trembling with rage, 'If yon conduct yourself thus, I will send your father to prison for the money he owes and cannot pay.' I begged him to have pity on me; promised to do everything I could to serve him, and show my gratitude, but I declared nothing could induce me to degrade myself. "Yes; this is the language of Louise," said Morel. "of my Louise, when she had the right to be proud. But how! Continue—continue." * *

"The next morning after this scene, in spite of the threats of my master, I came here and told my father all. He wished to make me leave the house at once; but there was the prison. The little that I earned was indispensable to the family, since the illness of my mother; and the bad character which Mr. Ferrand threatened to give me would prevent my seeking or obtaining another place for a long time, perhaps."

"Yes," said Morel, with great bitterness, "we had the cowardice, the selfishness, to let our child return there. Oh! I told

you truly, poverty, poverty, how many crimes it causes to be committed?" "Alas! my father, did you not try all means to obtain the money? that being impossible, we had but to submit." "Go on. Your parents have been your executioners; we are more culpable than you," said the artisan, concealing his face in his hands.

"When I saw my master again," said Louise, "he acted towards me as usual, cross and harshly; he said not a word of the past; the housekeeper continued to torment me; she hardly gave me enough to eat, locked up the bread; sometimes, out of wickedness, she would defile the remains of the dinner before my eyes, for she always ate with Mr. Ferrand. At night I hardly slept; I feared at each moment to see the notary enter my room; he had taken away the commode with which I had barricaded my door; there only remained a chair, a little table, and my trunk; I always retired to bed dressed. For some time he left me tranquil; he did not even look at me. I began to be at ease, thinking that he thought no more of me. One Sunday he allowed me to go out; I came to announce this good news to my parents. We were all very happy! It is up to this moment you have known all, my father. What remains to tell," and the voice of Louise trembled, "is frightful. I have always concealed it from you."

"Oh! I was very sure of it—very sure that you concealed a secret from me," cried Morel, with a kind of wandering and singular volubility of expression which astonished Rodolphe. "Your pallor, your expression, should have enlightened me. A hundred times I have spoken to your mother; but, bah! she always repelled me. Look at us well. To escape a prison, leave our daughter at this monster's? And our child, where does she go to? On the criminal bench! Ah! but also—in short—who knows? exactly—because one is poor—yes—but the others?" bah! the others." Then stopping, as if to collect his thoughts, Morel struck himself on the forehead, and cried, "Stop! I do not know what I say. My head pains dreadfully. It seems to me I am drunk." And he concealed his face in his hands.

Rodolphe, not wishing to let Louise see how much he was alarmed at the incoherent language of her father, said, gravely, "You are not just, Morel; it was not for herself alone, but for her mother, her children, for yourself, that your poor wife feared

the consequences of Louise leaving the notary. Accuse no one. Let all the maledictions, all your hatred, fall on one man—on this monster of hypocrisy, who placed a girl between dishonour and ruin: the death, perhaps, of her father and his family; on this monster who abused in an infamous manner, his power as a master. But patience, I have told you Providence often reserves for great crimes a surpassing and frightful vengeance."

The words of Rodolphe were stamped with such force and conviction, in speaking of this providential vengeance, that Louise looked at him with surprise, almost with fear.

"Continue, my child," said he; "conceal nothing; this is more important than you think." "I began, then, to feel somewhat of security," said Louise, "when one night Mr. Ferrand and his housekeeper went out, each their own way. They did not dine at home; I remained alone. As usual, they left me some bread and water, and wine; my work finished, I dined, and then, fearing to remain alone in the apartments, I went up to my own room, after having lighted Mr. Ferrand's lamp. When he went out at night no one waited for him. I began to sew, and as was very unusual, by degrees sleep overpowered me. Ah! my father; cried Louise, "you will not believe me—you will accuse me of falsehood; and yet, on the corpse of my little sister, I swear I tell you the truth." "Explain yourself," said Rodolphe. "Alas! sir, for seven months I sought in vain to explain to myself this frightful night. I have almost lost my reason in trying to explain this mystery."

"My God!" cried the artisan, "what is she going to say?" "I was, contrary to my custom, asleep on my chair," continued Louise. "This is the last thing I recollect. Before—before—oh! my father pardon. I swear to you I am not culpable." "I believe you: but speak," "I do not know how long I slept, but when I awoke I was still in my chamber, but—"

* * * * * * *

"Oh! the wretch, the wretch:" cried Rodolphe. "Do you know, Morel, what he gave her to drink?" The artisan looked at Rodolphe, but made no reply. "The housekeeper, his accomplice, had put in the drink of Louise a soporific, opium, without doubt; the senses of your child had been paralized for some hours: when she awoke from the lethargic sleep, this crime had been committed."

"Ah! now, cried Louise, "my misfortune is explained; do you see, my father, I am less culpable than I appear to be. My father! answer me then?"

The look of the artisan was of a frightful vagueness.

Such horrible perversity could not be understood by this honest and simple hearted man. He could hardly comprehend the frightful revelation. And, besides, it must be said, that for some moments his reason had deserted him; at each moment his ideas became more obscure; then he fell into that vacuity of thought which is to the mind what night is to the sight: formidable symptoms of mental alienation. Yet Morel answered in a quick, dull, and mournful tone, "Oh! yes, it is very wicked, very wicked."

And he fell back into his apathy. Rodolphe looked at him with anxiety; he thought that the intensity of indignation, began to be exhausted within him; the same as after violent grief tears are often wanting. Wishing to terminate as soon as possible this sad conversation, Rodolphe, said to Louise,

"Courage my child; proceed to unveil this tissue of horrors."

"Alas! sir, what you have heard is nothing as yet." * *

"Ah! all precautions were taken to conceal his enormity;" cried Rodolphe.

"Yes, sir, and I was ruined. To all that he said to me I could find no answer. Ignorant what drink I had taken, I could not explain my long sleep. Appearances were against me. If I complained, every one would condemn me; it must be so, for to me all was an impenetrable mystery."

CHAPTER XV.

THE CRIME.

Rodolphe remained confounded at the detestable villany of Ferrand. "Then," said he to Louise, "you did not dare to complain to your father of the conduct of the notary?"

"No, sir; I feared he would have thought me the accomplice instead of the victim. and, besides, I feared that, in his anger, my father would forget that his liberty, the existence of his family, depended entirely upon my master." * * * *

"And was his conduct less brutal towards you afterward?'

"No, sir; to drive away suspicion, when by chance he had

the Curé of Bonne Nouvelle and his vicar to dinner, my master addressed me before them with severe reproaches: he prayed the Curé to admonish me; he said that sooner or later I should be lost; that my manners were too free with his clerks; that I was idle; that he kept me out of charity for my father, an honest man with a family, whom he had served. All this was false. I never saw the clerks: they were in a separate building from us." "And when you found yourself alone with Ferrand, how did he explain his conduct towards you before the Curé?" "He assured me that he joked. But the Curé took these accusations for serious; he told me severely that one must be doubly vicious to act thus in a holy house, where I had religious examples continually before my eyes. To that I did not know what to answer; I held down my head, blushing; my silence, my confusion, turned still more against me; my life was such a burden that several times I was on the point of destroying myself; but I thought of my father, my mother, my brothers and sisters, whom I helped to support. I resigned myself; in the midst of my degradation I found a consolation; at least, my father was saved from prison. A new misfortune overwhelmed me; I was enciente. I saw myself altogether lost. I do not know why, I had a presentiment that, Ferrand, in learning an event which should have rendered him less cruel towards me, would increase his bad treatment; I was, however, far from supposing what would happen."

Morel recovered from his momentary aberration, looked around with astonishment, passed his hand over his face, collected his thoughts, and said to his daughter:—

"It seems to me I have forgotten myself for a moment—fatigue, sorrow. What did you say?" "When Mr. Ferrand was informed of my situation—" The artisan made a movement of despair; Rodolphe calmed him with a look.

"Go on, I will listen to the end," said Morel. "Go on, go on." Louise resumed. "I asked Ferrand by what means I should conceal my shame. * * * Interrupting me with indignation, and a faint surprise, he pretended not to understand me; he asked me if I were mad; frightened, I cried, 'but, my God, what do you wish to become of me now? If you have no pity on me, have, at least, some pity on your child!' 'What a horror!' cried he, raising his hands towards heaven. 'How, wretch! you have the audacity to accuse me of being

corrupt enough to descend to a girl of your class! you have effrontery enough to accuse me! I, who have a hundred times repeated before the most respectable witnesses that you would be ruined, vile slut. Leave my house this moment.'"

Rodolphe and Morel remained horror-struck; such infernal hypocrisy overpowered them. "Oh! I confess," said Rodolphe, "this passes all conception." Morel said nothing; his eyes became enlarged in a fearful manner; a convulsive spasm contracted his features; he descended from the bench where he was seated, opened quickly a drawer, and took out a strong and very sharp file, with a wooden handle, and rushed towards the door.

Rodolphe, divining his thoughts, seized him by the arm and stopped him. "Morel, where are you going to? You will ruin yourself, unfortunate man!" "Take care," cried the artisan, furiously, struggling. "I shall commit two crimes instead of one!" and the madman threatened Rodolphe.

"My father he is our deliverer!" cried Louise.

"He is mocking us; bah! he wishes to save him, the notary!" answered Morel, completely wild, and contending with Rodolphe. At the end of a second, he succeeded in disarming him, opened the door, and threw the instrument on the staircase. Louise ran to the artisan, held him in her arms, and said, "Father, he is our benefactor! you have raised your hand on him; come to yourself!"

These words recalled Morel to himself; he covered his face with his hands, and without saying a word, he fell at Rodolphe's feet. "Raise yourself, unfortunate father," said Rodolphe, kindly. "Patience—patience; I understand your fury, I partake of your hatred; but, in the name of your vengeance, do not compromise it."

"My God!" cried the artisan, raising himself up. "But what can justice—the law—do in such a case? Poor as we are; when we go and accuse this powerful, rich, and respected man, they will laugh in our face, ah, ah!" and he laughed convulsively. "And they will be right. Where are our proofs? yes, our proofs? They will not believe us. Therefore, I tell you," cried he, in another storm of madness, "I tell you I have no confidence but in the impartiality of the knife."

"Silence, Morel; grief makes you wander," said Rodolphe, suddenly. "Let your daughter speak; the moments are pre-

cious, the officer awaits; I must know all. Continue, my child." "It is useless, sir," said Louise, "to speak to you of my tears, my prayers; I was disregarded. This took place at ten o'clock in the morning, in the cabinet of Mr. Ferrand; the curé was to breakfast with him that morning; he entered the moment my master was loading me with reproaches and outrages; he appeared much vexed at the sight of the priest." "And what did he say then?" "He soon made up his mind what course to pursue; he cried, pointing to me. 'Well! I said truly that this creature would be ruined. She is lost—lost for ever; she has just acknowledged to me her fault and her shame, begging me to save her. And to think that I, through pity, have received such a wretch into my house!' 'How,' said the abbé to me, with indignation; 'in spite of the salutary councils which your master has given you so often before me, you have thus degraded yourself. Oh! this is unpardonable.' 'My friend, after the kindness you have shown her and her family, pity would be a weakness. Be inexorable,' said the abbé, a dupe, like every body else, of the hypocrisy of Ferrand."

"And you did not at once unmask the scoundrel?" said Rodolphe. "Oh! sir, I was terrified, my head turned; I dared not, I could not pronounce a word; yet I wished to speak, to defend myself. But I cried— 'Not a word more unworthy creature,' said Ferrand, interrupting me; you have heard the abbé. Pity would be weakness: in an hour you leave my house.' Then, without giving me time to answer, he led the abbé into another room.

"After the departure of Ferrand," continued Louise, "I was for a moment, as it were, delirious. I saw myself driven from his house, not able to get another place, on account of my situation and the bad character my master would give me. I did not doubt but that in his anger he would imprison my father. I did not know what would become of me; I went, for refuge and to weep, to my chamber. At the end of two hours Ferrand appeared. 'Is your trunk ready?' said he. 'Mercy!' I cried, falling at his feet, 'do not send me away in the state in which I am; what will become of me? I can find no other place!' 'So much the better; God will thus punish your conduct and your lies.' 'You dare to say I lie!' cried I indignantly; 'you dare to say you are not the cause of my ruin!' 'Leave my house at once, you infamous creature, since you persist in your calumnies,'

cried he, in a terrible voice. 'And to punish you, to-morrow I will imprison your father!' 'Well, no, no!' said I aghast, 'I will accuse you no longer—I promise you; but do not drive me away—have pity on my father; the little I earn here supports my family. Keep me here—I will say nothing—I will conceal everything as long as I can, and then—you can send me away.

"After renewed supplications, Ferrand consented to my prayers; I regarded it as a great favour, so frightful was my condition. Yet, for the five months which followed this cruel scene, I was very unhappy, very cruelly treated; sometimes only Mr. Germain, whom I saw but seldom, interrogated me with kindness concerning my sorrows; but shame forbade my confession."

"Is it not about this time that he came to live here?"

"Yes, sir, he wished for a room near the temple or the arsenal; there was one to be let here; it suited him." "And you never thought of confiding your sorrows to Mr. Germain?" asked Rodolphe. "No, sir, he was also a dupe of Ferrand's; he said he was hard and exacting, but he thought him the most honest man in the world. I passed these five months in tears, in continual agony; with care, I had concealed my situation from all eyes, but I could hope to do so no longer. The future was to me the most dreadful; Ferrand had declared he would keep me no longer with him. I was thus about to be deprived of the small resource that aided our family to live. Cursed, driven away by my father; for, after the falsehoods I had told him to dissipate his suspicions, he would not believe me to be the victim of Ferrand. What was to become of me? where was I to fly to? where to find a refuge? I had, then, a very wicked idea. I confess this because I wish to conceal nothing, even that which may cast suspicion on me, and also to show you to what an extremity I was reduced by the cruelty of Ferrand. If I had yielded to a fatal thought, would he not have been an accomplice of my crime?"

After a moment's silence, Louise resumed with an effort, and in a trembling voice, "I had heard from the porteress that a quack lived in the house—and—" She could not finish.

Rodolphe remembered at his first interview with Madame Pipelet he had received from the postman, in the absence of the porteress, a letter written on coarse paper, in a disguised hand, and on which he had remarked the traces of tears. "And you did write him, unhappy child—three days since? On this letter

you have wept; your writing was disguised." Louise looked at Rodolphe with affright. "How do you know, sir?"

"Calm yourself. I was alone in the lodge of Madame Pipelet when this letter was handed in, and it was my chance to receive it." "Well! yes, sir; in this letter, without signature, I wrote to Mr. Bradamanté, that, not daring to come to him, I begged he would meet me that evening near the Chateau d'Eau. I was half crazy. I wished to ask his fearful advice. I left my master's house to meet him, but my reason returned; I regained the house, I did not see him. Thus a scene took place, from the consequences of which I am now suffering—Ferrand believing me gone out for two hours, while after a very short time I returned.

"In pacing before the little door of the garden, to my great astonishment, I saw it open; I entered that way, and I carried the key to the cabinet of Ferrand, where it was ordinarily kept. This was next to his bedchamber, the most retired place in the house; it was there he gave his secret audiences. You will see, sir, why I give you these details: knowing all the ways of the house very well, after having crossed the dining-room, which was lighted, I entered into the saloon in the dark, then to the cabinet. The door of his chamber opened the moment I placed the key on the table. Hardly had my master perceived me, by the light which was burning in his chamber, than he closed the door quickly on a person whom I could not see; then he threw himself on me, seized me by the throat as if he wished to strangle me, and said to me in a low tone, at once furious and alarmed, 'You were spying; you listened at the door; what did you hear? Answer, or I'll strangle you.' But, changing his mind without giving me time to say a word, he pushed me backward into the dining-room: the office was open; he threw me into it brutally and locked the door."

"And you heard nothing of his conversation?"

"Nothing, sir; if I had known he had anybody in his room, I should have taken care not to have entered the cabinet; he forbade even Madame Seraphin to do so." "And when you came out of the office, what did he say to you?" "It was the housekeeper who came to conduct me, and I did not see him again that night. The alarm I had experienced had made me very ill. The next morning as I came down stairs, I met Ferrand. I shuddered

in thinking of his threats of the evening previous; what was my surprise when he said to me, almost calmly, 'You know I forbid any one to come into my cabinet when I have some one in my chamber; but for the short time you have to remain here it is useless to scold any more;' and he passed into his office. This moderation surprised me, after the violence of the previous evening. I went on with my usual duties. I went to put in order his sleeping apartment. In arranging some clothes in a dark closet near the alcove, I was suddenly taken very ill; I felt that I was about to faint. In falling, I grasped at a cloak which was hanging against the wall. I dragged it along with me; it covered me completely as I lay upon the floor. When I came to myself, the glass door of this closet was shut. I heard the voice of Ferrand. He spoke very loud. Recollecting the scene of the previous evening, I thought myself killed if I stirred; I supposed, that, concealed under the mantle which had fallen on me, my master, in shutting the door, had not perceived me. If he discovered me, how could I make him believe my presence was accidental? I held my breath, and, in spite of myself, I heard the end of this conversation, which doubtless had been commenced for some time."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CONVERSATION.

"And who was the person who was talking with him?" asked Rodolphe.

"I am ignorant, sir; I did not know the voice."

"And what did they say?"

"The conversation had lasted for some time, doubtless, for this is all I heard. 'Nothing can be plainer,' said this unknown voice; 'a queer fish, called Bras-Rouge, a determined smuggler, has brought me, for the affair I have just spoken about, in connection with a family of fresh-water pirates, who are established at the point of a little island near Asnieres; they are the greatest bandits in the land: the father and grandfather have both been guillotined; two of the sons are at the galleys for life; but the mother, three sons, and two daughters are left, all as great villains one as the other. It is said, that at night, to rob on both

sides of the Seine, they come down in their boats sometimes as far as Bercy. They are folks who will kill the first that come, for a crown; but we have no need of them; it suffices if they will give hospitality to your country lady. The Martials (this is the name of my pirates) will pass in her eyes for an honest family of fisherman; I will go on your account, and make two or three visits to your young lady; I will order her certain potions, and at the end of eight days she will make acquaintance with the cemetery of Asnieres. In the village, a death passes like a letter through the post-office, while at Paris they scrutinize too closely. But when will you send your country girl to the island, so that I can advise the Martials what part they have to play?"

"'She will arrive to-morrow, and the day after she will be there,' answered Ferrand; 'and I will inform her that Doctor Vincent will take care of her on my account.' 'Agreed as to the name of Vincent,' said the voice; 'I like that as well as any other.'"

"What is this new mystery of crime and infamy?" said Rodolphe, more and more surprised.

"New? no, sir; you will see that it has reference to a crime that you do know," answered Louise; and she continued: "I heard the movement of chairs; the conversation was at an end. 'I do not ask you to be secret,' said Ferrand; you hold me as I hold you.' 'That proves that we can serve, but never injure one another,' answered the voice; see my zeal! I received your letter last night at ten o'clock—this morning I am here; farewell, accomplice; do not forget the island of Asnieres, the fisherman Martial, and Doctor Vincent. Thanks to these three magical words; your country girl has only eight days left.' 'Stop,' said Ferrand, 'while I go and unbolt the door of my cabinet, and see if there is any one in the antechamber, that you may go out by the garden as you came in.' He went out for a moment, then returned, and finally I heard him go off with the unknown person. You may imagine my alarm, during this conversation, Madame Seraphin came to seek me in my chamber, where I had gone more trembling and sick than I had yet been. 'Master wants you,' added she; 'you have more good luck than you deserve; come, descend. You are very pale; what you are going to learn will give you more colour."

"I followed her; Ferrand was in his cabinet. At seeing him I shuddered in spite of myself, yet he had a less wicked look than

usual; he looked at me fixedly for a long time, as if he wished to read my thoughts. I cast down my eyes. 'You appear very ill,' said he. 'Yes, sir,' I answered, astonished that he did not address me familiarly as usual. 'It is very plain,' added he, it is in consequence of your situation; but notwithstanding your lies, your bad conduct, and your indiscretion of yesterday,' added he, in a softened tone, 'I have pity on you. Although I have treated you as you deserved before the curé of the parish, such an affair as this will be a scandal to my house; and, moreover, your family will be in despair. I consent, under these circumstances, to come to your assistance.' 'Ah! sir," I cried; these words of kindness on your part make me forget all.' 'Forget what?' asked he, sharply. 'Nothing, nothing,' answered I, fearing to irritate him, and believing in his professions of pity. 'Listen to me,' said he; you will go and see your father to-day; you will announce to him that I am going to send you for two or three months in the country to take charge of a house I have just bought; during your absence I will send him your wages. To-morrow you will leave Paris; I will give you a letter of recommendation to Madame Martial, the mother of a family of honest fishermen, who live near Asnieres. You will require to say you came from the country, nothing more. Later you will know the object of this letter, all for your interest. Madame Martial will treat you as her child; a physician, a friend of mine, Doctor Vincent, will take you under his charge. You see how good I am to you.

"What a horrible plot," cried Rodolphe; "now I comprehend all. Believing that the evening previous you had become possessed of a secret of great importance to him, he wished to get rid of you. He had probably some interest in deceiving his accomplice, in representing you as a girl from the country. What must have been your affright at this proposition!" "It was a a great blow. I was completely bewildered; I knew not what to answer. I looked at him with affright; my mind wandered. I was about, perhaps, to risk my life in telling him that I had overheard his projects in the morning, when happily, I recollected the new dangers to which this would expose me. 'You do not comprehend me, then?' asked he, with impatience. 'Yes, sir; but,' said I, trembling, 'I prefer not to go to the country.' 'Why not? You will be perfectly well taken care of, where I

shall send you.' 'No, no, I will not go; I prefer to remain in Paris, near my family; I had rather confess all, die with shame, if it is necessary.' 'You refuse me!' said Ferrand, restraining his anger, and looking at me with attention. 'Why have you changed your mind so quickly? Just now, you accepted. I saw that if he suspected me, I was lost; I answered that I did not think that he meant me to leave Paris and my family.' 'But you will dishonour your family, wretch,' cried he; and not being able any longer to contain himself, he seized me by the arm, and pushed me so violently, that I fell. 'I give you until after to-morrow,' cried he: 'to-morrow you shall leave this to go to the Martials, or to tell your father I have sent you away, and that he goes the same day to prison.' I remained alone stretched on the earth; I had not strength to get up. Madame Seraphin came, and with her assistance I regained my chamber. I threw myself on my bed; I remained there until night."

* * * * * * *

"Amid the horrors of this frightful, solitary night, I had a moment of bitter joy: it was when I pressed my child to my arms." And the voice of Louise was suffocated with her tears. Morel had listened to the story of his daughter with an antipathy, a silent indifference which alarmed Rodolphe.

Yet, seeing her in tears, he looked at her fixedly, and said,

"She weeps—she weeps: why, then, does she weep? Oh! yes; I know—the notary. Continue, my poor Louise; you are my child. I love you still—just now I did not know you; my tears obscured my sight. Oh! God! my head—my head—it gives me great pain." "You see I am not culpable; is it not so my father?" "Yes, yes." "It is a great sorrow—but I feared the notary so much!" "The notary? oh, I believe you—he is so bad—he is so wicked!" "You pardon me now?" "Yes." "Truly?" "Yes, truly. Oh, I love you still—go—although—I cannot say—do you see—because oh! my head!" Louise looked at Rodolphe with alarm.

"He suffers: let him compose himself. Continue."

"I pressed my child to my heart. I was astonished not to hear it breathe, but I said to myself, the respiration of so small a child can hardly be heard; and yet it seemed to me that it was very cold. I had no light. I waited until dawn, trying to warm it as well as I could. At daylight I found it was stiff—icy. I

placed my hand on its heart; it did not beat—it was dead."

And Louise burst into bitter sobs.

"Oh! at this moment," continued she, "thoughts passed impossible to describe. I remember it confusedly as a dream; it was at once despair, terror, anger, and, above all, I was seized with another alarm; I no longer dreaded that Ferrand would strangle me, but I feared that if my child was found dead at my side, I should be accused of having killed it; then I had but one thought, that of concealing it from all eyes; in that way, my dishonour would not be known; I would no longer have to dread the anger of my father; I should escape the vengeance of Ferrand; then I could leave his house, procure another place, and continue to earn something towards the support of my family. Alas! such are the reasons which induced me to acknowledge nothing, to conceal the body of my child, it was wrong, certainly; but the position I was in, overwhelmed on all sides, crushed by long sufferings, almost delirous, I did not reflect to what I exposed myself, if I was discovered."

"What tortures!" said Rodolphe, overcome.

"Daylight increased," continued Louise; "in a short time every one would be awake in the house. I hesitated no longer. I wrapped up my child as well as I could; I descended very softly; I went to the end of the garden to make a hole in the ground, to bury it; but it had frozen all night—the earth was too hard. Then I hid the body at the bottom of a kind of cellar, where no one went in winter. I covered it with an empty flower-box, returned to my room without seeing any one. Of all I tell you, I have but a confused idea. Feeble as I was, I can as yet hardly comprehend how I had strength to do all this. At nine o'clock, Madame Seraphin came to know why I was not up. I said that I was so ill; I begged her to let me remain in bed all day; the next day I would quit the house, since Ferrand sent me away. At the end of one hour he came himself. 'You are worse; this is the consequence of your self-will, said he: 'if you had profited by my offers, to-day you would have been established with kind people, who would have taken every care of you; however, I will not be so inhuman as to see you suffer; to-night Doctor Vincent will come and see you.' At this threat I shuddered with fear. I answered that I was wrong the night before to refuse his offers; that I accepted them; but that, as yet being too ill to leave, I would go the next day but one to the Martials,'

and that it was useless to send for Doctor Vincent. I only wished to gain time; I was decided to leave the house, and go to my father. I hoped in this manner he would be ignorant of all. But, deceived by my promise, Ferrand was almost affectionate towards me, and recommended me, for the first time in his life, to the care of Madame Seraphin.

"I passed the day in mental agony, trembling at each moment that chance would cause a discovery of the body of my child. I only desired one thing—that the cold might cease, so that I might be able to dig a grave. It snowed—that gave me hopes. I remained all day in my bed. The night being come; I waited till every one was asleep. I had strength to get up, to go to the the woodpile to look for a hatchet to cut some wood, to make a hole in the frozen ground. After infinite trouble, I at last succeeded: then I took the body, I wept again over it, and I buried it as I could, in the little flower-box. I did not know a prayer for the dead; but I prayed to God to receive it into his paradise. I thought my courage would have failed me when I covered it with the earth. A mother! interring her child! At length I succeeded. Oh! God! what it cost me. I placed the snow over the grave, so that nothing could be seen. The moon gave me light. When all was finished I could not make up my mind to come away. Poor little thing! in the frozen ground—under the snow. Although it was dead, it seemed to me that it must feel the cold. At length I returned to my chamber. I went to bed with a violent fever. In the morning Ferrand sent to know how I was. I answered that I felt rather better, and that I should certainly be ready to leave for the country the next day. I remained all this day in bed, in order to gain strength. In the evening I arose. I went to the kitchen to warm myself. I remained late, all alone. I went to the garden to say a last prayer. At the moment I ascended towards my chamber, I met Mr. Germain on the landing-place of the cabinet where he sometimes worked; he was very pale. He said to me, quickly, placing a rouleau in my hand, 'Your father will be arrested early to-morrow morning; here is the money; as soon as it is day, run to his house. It is only to-day I have found out Mr. Ferrand; he is a bad man; I will unmask him. Do not, above all, say that you have this money from me;' and Mr. Germain, not giving me time to thank him, descended the stairs quickly."

CHAPTER XVII.

MADNESS.

"This morning," continued Louise, "before any one was up, I came here with the money, but it was not sufficient; and without your generosity, he would not have escaped the bailiffs. Probably, after my departure some one had gone to my room and discovered some traces which has led to this discovery. A last service I ask of you," said Louise, drawing out the rouleau of gold from her pocket: "will you hand this money to Mr. Germain? I promised him not to tell any one that he was employed at Ferrand's, but, since you know it, I have not been indiscreet. Now, I repeat, before God, who hears me, and before you, I have not said a word that is not true. I have sought to—" But interrupting herself suddenly, Louise, much alarmed, cried, "Oh, sir, look at my father! what is the matter with him?" Morel had listened to the last part of this narrative with sombre indifference, which Rodolphe had explained to himself, by attributing it to the overwhelming grief of this unhappy man; after so many violent shocks, so oft repeated, his tears were dried up, his sensibility blunted— he has not even strength enough left to vent his indignation, thought Rodolphe. He was mistaken. Like the flickering light of a lamp, about to expire, the reason of Morel, already strongly shaken, vacillated for some time, showed forth now and then some last rays of intelligence, and then suddenly became obscured.

Absolutely a stranger to what was said, to what passed around him, in a few moments the artisan had become mad.

Although his wheel was placed the other side of his work-table, and he had neither diamonds nor tools, the artisan, attentively occupied, imitated his ordinary occupations. He accompanied this pantomine with a kind of rolling noise with his tongue, making a noise like the wheel when in operation. "But, sir," said Louise, with increased alarm, "look at my father!" Then approaching him, she said, "Father! father!"

Morel looked at his daughter with that vacant stare so peculiar to lunatics. Without ceasing for a moment his imaginary occupation, he answered, in a soft and mournful voice, "I owe thirteen hundred francs to the notary, the price of Louise's blood. I must work, work! Oh, I will pay—will pay!" "Oh, my God! but

this is not possible, this cannot last; he is not altogether mad is he?" cried Louise, in a heart-rending tone. "He will come to himself—it is only a momentary—"

"Morel! my friend," said Rodolphe, "we are here. Your daughter is alongside of you; she is innocent."

"Thirteen hundred francs," said the artisan, without looking at Rodolphe, and continuing his imaginary occupation. "Father;" cried Louise, throwing herself at his feet, and taking hold of his hands, "it is I, Louise!" "Thirteen hundred francs," repeated he, endeavouring to disengage himself from Louise: "or else Louise is guillotined;" and he began to turn his wheel. Louise uttered a piercing cry. "He is mad!" cried she; "he is mad! and it is I, who am the cause! Oh, my God! Yet, it is not my fault; I did not wish to do wrong: it is this monster!"

"Come, poor child, courage!" said Rodolphe, "let us hope. This madness will be but momentary. Your father has suffered too much; his reason has become weakened: he will get better."

"But my mother—my grandmother—my brothers and sister! what will become of them?" cried Louise. "See, they are deprived of both my father and myself. They will die with hunger, with poverty and despair." "am I not here? Be calm, they shall want for nothing. Courage, I pray you; your revelation will cause the punishment of a great criminal. You have convinced me of your innocence; it shall certainly be known and acknowledged." "Ah! sir, you see dishonour—madness—death: these are the evils he has caused—this man! nothing can be done to him—nothing. Ah! this thought completes all my troubles." "Far from that; let a contrary thought aid you in supporting them." "What do you say?" "Carry with you the certainty that you shall be avenged." "Avenged?"

"Yes! and I swear it to you," answered Rodolphe, with solemnity, "I swear to you that his crimes once proved, this man shall severely expiate the dishonour, madness, and death he has caused. If the laws are powerless, if his cunning and address equal his misdeeds, to his cunning shall be opposed cunning; to his misdeeds, misdeeds; but which shall be to them what the just and avenging punishment, inflicted on the culpable by an inexorable hand, is to the cowardly and concealed murder." "Ah! sir, may God hear you. It is not for myself I wish to revenge, it is my poor father, it is—" then turning to her father, she cried, "Father,

farewell. They take me to prison—I shall never see you more; it is your Louise who bids you farewell—father, father!"

At this touching appeal nothing responded in this poor annihilated mind. The paternal cords, always the last broken, vibrated no more.

The door of the garret opened, and the officer entered.

"My moments are counted, sir," said to Rodolphe: "I declare to you, with regret, that it is impossible for me to wait any longer." "The conversation is terminated, sir," answered Rodolphe, bitterly, pointing to the artisan. "Louise has nothing more to say to her father—he has nothing more to hear from his daughter—he is mad." "Great God! just what I feared! Ah, it is frightful!" cried the officer. And approaching quickly to the artisan, after a moment's examination, he was convinced of the sad reality. "Ah! sir," said he, sadly, to Rodolphe: I have already made sincere wishes that the innocence of this young girl may be proved. But now, I will not confine nyself to wishes; no, no: I will tell of this last dreadful blow, and do not doubt it, the judges will have a motive the more to find her innocent." "Well, well, sir," said Rodolphe, "in acting thus, it is not only your duty you fulfil, but you are performing a worthy part." "believe me, sir, some of our missions are so painful, that it is with happiness, with gratitude, that we interest ourselves in what is good and virtuous." "One word more, sir, the revelations of Louise Morel have evidently proved to me her innocence. Can you inform me how her pretended crime as been discovered, or, rather, denounced?" "This morning," said the officer, "a woman in the employ of Ferrand, the notary, came and declared to me, that, after the precipitate flight of Louise Morel, who she knew was enceinte, she had gone up into the chamber of this young girl, and that she had there found traces of a clandestine accouchement; after some investigations, some footsteps in the snow had led to the discovery of a new-born child interred in the garden.

"On the relation of this woman, I went to the Rue du Sentier. I found Ferrand very indignant that such a thing should have occured in his house. The curé of the church of Bonne-Nouvelle, whom he had sent for, also declared to me that the girl, Morel, had acknowledged her fault before him, one day, that she had implored the pity and the indulgence of her master, and, that, still more, he had often heard Ferrand give Louise Morel the

most severe reprimands, predicting that sooner or later, she would be ruined. 'A prediction which had just been realized so unfortunately,' added the abbé. The indignation of Ferrand," continued the officer, "appeared to me so real that I partook of it. He told me that, without doubt, Louise Morel had taken refuge at her father's. I came here at once; the crime being flagrant, I had the right to proceed to an immediate arrest."

Rodolphe restrained himself, in hearing the indignation of Ferrand spoken of, he said to the officer:

"I thank you a thousand times, for your kindness, and for the assistance you tender Louise; I shall conduct this unfortunate man to a lunatic hospital, as well as the mother of his wife." Then, addressing Louise, who yet kneeled before her father, trying, in vain, to restore him to reason: "Be resigned, my child, go without embracing your mother; spare her this touching farewell. Be assured as to her welfare—nothing shall henceforth be wanting—I will find a woman who will take care of your mother, and your brothers and sister under the superintendance of your good neighbour, Rigolette. As to your father, nothing shall be spared, that his cure may be rapid and complete. Courage, then: virtuous people are often harshly tried by misfortunes, but they always come out of these struggles purer, stronger, and more respected." * * * * * * * * * *

Two hours after the arrest of Louise, the artisan and the old idiot were, by the orders of Rodolphe, conducted by David to Charenton: they were to have chamber treatment, and receive particular care and attention. Morel left the house without resistance, he went where they took him; his madness was inoffensive and sad. The grandmother was hungry; they showed her food, and she followed.

The diamonds and rubies confided to the wife of the artisan were the same day given to Madame Mathieu, the broker, who came to get them. Unfortunately, this woman was watched and followed by Tortillard, who knew the value of the pretended false jewels, from the conversation he had overheard when Morel was arrested by the bailiffs. The son of Bras-Rouge ascertained that she lived on the Boulevard Saint Denis.

Rigolette informed Madame Morel, with much tact, of the lunacy of her husband, and the imprisonment of Louise. At first she wept much, uttering sorrowful cries; then the first feelings of

grief over, the poor creature, weak and unsettled, consoled herself, by degrees, in seeing herself and children, surrounded by comforts which they owed to the generosity of their benefactor.

As to Rodolphe, his thoughts were bitter in thinking of the revelations of Louise.

CHAPTER XVIII.

JACQUES FERRAND.

Some words now on the personal appearance of Ferrand, and we will introduce the reader into the study of the notary, where he will find the principal personages of this story. Ferrand had passed his fiftieth year. He did not appear more than forty; he was of middle size, round shouldered, square built, strong, thick-set, red-haired, shaggy as a bear. His hair laid smooth on his temples, the top of his head was bald, his eyebrows hardly to be perceived; his bilious-looking skin was covered with large freckles; but when any lively emotion agitated it, this yellow, clayey visage filled with blood, and became a livid red.

His face was as flat as a death's head. His nose crushed down; his lips were so thin, so imperceptible, that his mouth seemed cut in his face; when he smiled in a wicked and sinister manner, the ends of his teeth could be seen, almost all black and decayed. Closely shaved to his temples, this man's countenance had an expression at once austere and sanctified, impassible, rigid, cold and reflecting; his little black eyes—quick, piercing, restless—were hidden by green spectacles.

Jacques Ferrand had excellent sight, but under the shelter of his spectacles he had great advantage, to observe without being observed; he knew how much a glance of the eye is often and involuntarily significant. In spite of his imperturbable audacity, he had encountered, two or three times in his life, certain powerful looks, before which he had been forced to quail. Now, in some circumstances, it is fatal to cast down your eyes before the man who interrogates, accuses, or judges you. The large spectacles of Ferrand were then a kind of covered breast-work, from whence he could attentively examine the manœuvres of the enemy; for many such he had to encounter, because many found themselves more or less his dupes.

He affected in his dress a negligence which reached to uncleanliness; or rather, it was naturally rusty and mean; his face shaved every two or three days, his dirty bald head, his black nails, his old snuff-coloured coat, his greasy hat, his threadbare cravat, his black woollen hose, his coarse shoes, recommended him singularly to his clients, in giving him an air of detachment from the world, and a perfume of practical philosophy which charmed them. "To what pleasures—what passions—could the notary," said they, "sacrifice the confidence which was shown him?" He gained, perhaps, sixty thousand francs a year, and his household was composed of a servant and an old housekeeper; his sole pleasure was to go every Sunday to mass and vespers; he knew no opera comparable to the solemn sounds of the organ, no company which could equal an evening passed at his fireside with the curate of his parish, after a frugal dinner. Finally, he placed his delight in his probity, his pride in his honour, his happines in his religion."

Such was the opinion of many concerning Jacques Ferrand. His office resembled all offices, his clerks all other clerks. It was reached by an antechamber furnished with four old chairs. In the office, properly so called, surrounded by shelves furnished with paper boxes, containing documents belonging to the clients of the notary, five young men, bending over desks of black wood, laughed, talked, or scribbled incessantly. An adjoining room, in which usually remained the first clerk, then an empty room, which, for the sake of secrecy, separated the cabinet of the notary from the other offices, such was the ensemble of this laboratory of all kinds and sorts. Two o'clock had just struck by an old cuckoo clock, placed between the two windows of the office; a certain agitation seemed to reign among the clerks: some fragments of their conversation will explain the causes of this commotion.

"Certainly, if any one had told me that François Germain was a robber," said one of the young men, "I should have answered, 'you are a liar!'" "And I also;" "And I! it produced such an effect on me to see him arrested and taken away by the guard, that could not I eat my breakfast. I was recompensed, however, for it spared me from eating the daily mess of Madame Seraphin." "Seventeen thousand francs; it is a sum."

"A famous sum!" "And to say, that for seventeen months

since he has been cashier, never has he been wanting a centime in his cash account."

"As for me, I think Ferrand was wrong to arrest Germain, since the poor fellow swore that he had only taken thirteen hundred francs in gold." "Yes. And so much the more, that he brought back the amount this morning at the moment Ferrand had sent for the guard."

"That is the consequence of being of such rigid probity. Such people are always without pity."

"Never mind; one ought to think twice before ruining a poor young man who always conducted himself well until now."

"Ferrand would reply to that, 'it was for the sake of example.'"

"The example of what? It is of no use to those that are honest; and those who are not, know well enough that they are likely to be discovered if they steal."

"The house is, however, a good customer for the officer."

"How?" "How, this morning the poor Louise; just now Germain." "As for me, the affair of Germain don't appear too clear." "Since he had acknowledged it?" "He confessed that he had taken thirteen hundred francs—yes; but he maintained that he had not taken the remaining fifteen thousand francs in bank bills, and the remaining seven hundred francs that were missing."

"Exactly; since he acknowledged one thing, why not the other?" "It is true, one is as much punished for five hundred as for fifteen thousand francs." "Yes; but one keeps the fifteen thousand francs, and on coming out of prison, that makes a nice little establishment, a rogue would say."

"Not so bad!" "One may well say there is something in that." "And Germain, who always defended his master when we called him a Jesuit."

"It is nevertheless, true; why hasn't he a right to go to mass? he would say; you have a right to stay away."

"Stop; here is Chalomel; how he will be astonished."

"About what? My good fellows, is there anything new concerning poor Louise?"

"You would have known, if you hadn't been absent so long."

"Hold; you think it is only a step from here to the Rue de Chaillot."

"Well; this famous Viscount Saint Remy?"

"Has he not come yet?" "No."

"His vehicle was all ready, and his valet told me that he would come at once; but he did not appear pleased, the domestic said. Ah, gentlemen, what a fine hotel; one might say it had belonged to the lords of the olden time," said Chalomel.

"I believe that he is in debt, and there are writs out against this viscount."

"A writ for thirty-four thousand francs, which has been sent here, since it is here he must come to pay it; the creditor prefers it, why, I know not."

"He must be able to pay it now, because he returned last night from the country, where he has been concealed for three days to escape the bailiffs."

"But why did they not levy on his furniture?"

"He is not such an ass! The house is not his; the furniture is in the name of his valet, who is looked upon as hiring him furnished lodgings, in the same way that his horses and carriages are in the name of his coachman, who says he lets them out to the viscount at so much per month. Oh! he is a cunning fellow. But what is that you were talking about? Has anything new happened here?"

"Just imagine; about two hours since, Ferrand came in like a madman; 'Germain is not here?' cried he. 'No, sir.' 'Well! the scoundrel has robbed me, last night, of seventeen thousand francs!' continued the master."

"Germain steal! Come, come, now."

"You shall see. 'How, sir! are you sure? But it is not possible.'"

"'I tell you, gentlemen, that I put yesterday, in the bureau where he works, fifteen notes of a thousand francs, besides two thousand francs in gold, in a small box; all has disappeared.' At this moment, Marriton, the porter, came in and said, 'Sir, the guard is coming.'"

"And Germain?" "Stop a moment. Ferrand said to the porter, 'As soon as Germain comes send him here without telling him anything. I wish to confound him before you, gentlemen,' continued he. At the end of fifteen minutes poor Germain arrived, as if nothing was the matter; Seraphin came to bring us our breakfast; she saluted her master, and said good day to us very tranquilly. 'Germain do you not breakfast?' said Ferrand.

'No, sir, I am not hungry, I thank you.' 'You come very late?' 'Yes; I have been to Belleville, this morning.' 'To conceal, doubtless, the money you have stolen from me,' cried Ferrand, with a terrible voice.' "And Germain?" "Ah! the poor boy became pale as death, stammering, 'Sir, I beg you, I supplicate you—do not ruin me.'" "He had stolen?" "Now do wait, Chalomel, 'Do not ruin me,' said he to Ferrand."

"'You acknowledge then, wretch?' 'Yes; but here is the money that is wanting. I thought I should be able to return it this morning before you were up; unfortunately, a friend, who had a small sum of mine, and whom I thought to find at home last night, had been at Belleville for two days; I was obliged to go there this morning, which has caused my delay. Pardon me, Sir, do not ruin me! In taking this money, I knew I could return it this morning. Here are the thirteen hundred francs in gold.' 'You have robbed me of fifteen notes, of one thousand francs each, that were in a green portfolio, and two thousand francs in gold!' 'I! never—' cried poor Germain. 'I took the thirteen hundred francs, but not one sou more. I have seen no portfolio in the drawer; there were only two thousand francs in gold in a box.' 'Oh! the infamous liar,' cried Ferrand. 'You have stolen thirteen hundred francs, you could have well stolen more; justice will decide. Oh! I shall be without pity for such a frightful breach of confidence. It will be an example.' Finally, my poor Chalomel, the guard arrived, with an officer to make out a commitment; they carried him off, and that's all."

"Can it be possible? Germain! the cream of honest people."

"It has appeared to us quite as singular."

"After all, it must be confessed, Germain was reserved; he never would tell where he lived."

"That is true." "He always had a mysterious air." "That's no reason why he should steal the money." "Doubtless. It is a remark I made."

"Ah, well; this is news; it is as if some one had given me a blow on the head; Germain, who looked so honest."

"One would have said that he had a presentiment of his misfortune."

"Why?" "For some time past he looked as if something troubled him.'

"It was, perhaps, concerning Louise."

"Louise?" "Oh; I only repeat what Madame Seraphin said this morning."

"What then?"

"That he was the lover of Louise, and the—"

"Ah! the cunning fellow."

"Stop, stop, stop!" "Ah, bah!"

"It is not two weeks since, that Germain told me, in confidence, that he was deeply in love with a little work girl, whom he had known in the house where he lived; and he had tears in his eyes when he spoke to me about her."

"Oh, Chalomel! Chalomel!"

"I tell you that Germain spoke seriously—"

At this moment the chief clerk entered the office.

"Well," said he to Chalomel, "have you finished all your errands?" "Yes; I have been to Saint Remy; he will be here shortly, to pay."

"And to the Countess M'Gregor?"

"Likewise; here is the answer."

"And to the Countess d'Orbigny?"

"She is much obliged to Mr. Ferrand. She arrived yesterday from Normandy; she did not expect an answer so soon. Here is her letter. I have, also, been to the intendant of the Marquis d'Harville, for the charges on the contract I signed, the other day, at the hotel."

"You told him that it was not pressing?"

"Yes; but he would pay it. There is the money. Ah; I forgot that this card was here, below, at the porter's; this gentleman asked for Mr. Ferrand."

"'Walter Murphy,'" read the chief clerk; and then, in pencil, '*Will return, at three o'clock, on important business.*' I do not know this name."

"Ah; I forgot," continued Chalomel; "Badinot said it was good; that Mr. Ferrand should do as he pleased; that would be always right."

"He did not give a written answer?"

"No; he said he hadn't time."

"Very well." "Mr. Charles Robert will also come, in the course of the day, to speak to the patron; it appears he fought a duel, yesterday, with the Duke of Lucenay." "Is he wounded?" "I believe not, or they would have told me of it at his house."

"Look; here is a carriage stopping." "Oh! the fine horses; are they not mettlesome?" "And this fat English coachman, with his white wig, and his brown livery with silver lace, and his epaulets, like a colonel." "It is an ambassador, surely." "And the chasseur, has he not enough of this silver lace." "And grand moustaches." "Hold!" said Chalomel, "it is the carriage of Viscount Saint Remy."

Soon afterward, Saint Remy entered the office.

CHAPTER XIX.

SAINT REMY.

Saint Remy arrived, the previous evening, from the farm of Arnouville, belonging to the Duchess de Lucenay, where he had found a refuge from the bailiffs, Malicorne and Boudin.

Saint Remy entered the office hastily, his hat on his head, his manner haughty and proud, eyes half closed, asking, in a very impertinent way, without looking at any one, "The notary? where is he?"

"Mr. Ferrand is busy in his office," answered the head clerk; "if you will wait a moment he will receive you." "How! wait? go and tell him that the Viscount Saint Remy is here. I find it very singular that this notary always makes me wait in his ante-chamber; it smells of the store."

"Please to pass into the next room, sir," said the clerk; "I will go, at once, and inform Mr. Ferrand."

Saint Remy shrugged his shoulders, and followed the head clerk. At the end of a quarter of an hour, which seemed to him very long, and which changed his contempt into rage, Saint Remy was introduced into the cabinet of the notary. Nothing could be more curious than the contrast of these two men, both profound physiognomists, and generally accustomed to judge, at a first glance, with whom they had to deal.

Saint Remy saw Ferrand for the first time. He was struck with the character of his wan, rigid, and impassible face; the expression concealed by his large green spectacles, the head half buried in an old black silk cap.

The notary was seated before his desk in a leathern arm-chair,

alongside of a broken-down fire place, filled with ashes, and in which were smoking two black stumps. Curtains of green muslin, almost in tatters, suspended from iron rods, concealed the lower part of the windows, and cast into this cabinet, already dark enough, a dull and disagreeable light. Shelves of black wood, filled with labelled boxes; some chairs of cherry-wood, covered with yellow Utrecht velvet; a mahogany clock; a yellow, moist, and slippery floor; a ceiling filled with cracks, and ornamented with garlands of spider-webs; such was the *sanctum* of Jacques Ferrand.

The viscount had not advanced two steps, had not said a single word, before the notary, who knew him by reputation, already hated him. In the first place, he saw in him a rival in knavery; and then, although of a mean and ignoble appearance himself, he did not the less detest, in others, elegance, grace, and youth; above all, when an air supremely insolent accompanied these advantages.

The notary ordinarily affected a sort of rudeness, almost gross, towards his clients, who only felt more esteem for him, for these manners of a peasant of the Danube. He promised himself to redouble this brutality towards the viscount.

He, knowing Ferrand only by reputation, expected to find in him a kind of scrivener, good-natured or ridiculous; the viscount figuring to himself, always, that men of proverbial probity must be a kind of simpletons. Far from this, the physiognomy of the scrivener imposed on the viscount an undefinable feeling, half fear, half hatred, although he had no serious reason to fear or hate him. Thus, in consequence of his resolute character, Saint Remy increased his insolence and habitual foppery of manner. The notary kept his cap upon his head; the viscount retained his hat, and, cried from the door, in a loud and sharp voice,

"It is, certainly, very strange, that you give me the trouble to come here, instead of sending to me for the money for the bills I have endorsed to this Badinot, and for which this fellow has sued me. You should not expose me to wait a quarter of an hour in your antechamber."

Ferrand, without paying the least attention, finished a calculation he was making, wiped his pen methodically on the sponge which lay near his inkstand, and raised toward the vis-

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count his cold, earthly, and flattened face, encumbered with the green spectacles.

It looked like a death's head, whose eyes had been replaced by great, fixed, glassy sockets.

After having looked at him for a moment in silence, he said to the viscount, in a rough, short tone, "Where is the money?"

This coolness exasperated Saint Remy.

"Where are the bills?"

With the end of one of his fingers, hard as iron, and covered with red hair, the notary, without answering, struck on a large portfolio of leather placed near him.

Decided to be equally laconic, although bursting with rage, the viscount took from the pocket of his coat a small book of Russia leather, clasped with golden hasps, drew out forty notes of one thousand francs each, and shewed them to the notary.

"How much?" asked he. "Forty thousand francs." "Give them to me." "Here; and let us finish quickly; do your business, pay yourself; hand me back the bills," said the viscount, throwing the packet impatiently on the table.

The notary took them, arose and examined them near the window, turning them over, one by one, with an attention so scrupulous, and so insulting to Saint Remy, that he grew pale with rage.

The notary, as if he had suspected the thoughts which agitated the viscount, shook his head, half turned towards him, and said, in an undefinable tone, "Such things are—"

For a moment astonished, Saint Remy replied, drily, "What?"

"Counterfeit bills," answered the notary, continuing to examine those he held closely.

"For what purpose do you make this remark to me, sir?"

Ferrand stopped a moment, looked steadily at the viscount through his glasses; then, shrugging up his shoulders, he turned again to counting and examining the bills.

"Death! sir, you must know, when I ask a question, I am always answered!" cried Saint Remy, irritated beyond measure at the calmness of Ferrand.

"*Those* are good," said the notary, turning towards his bureau,

from whence he took a bundle of stamped papers, to which were annexed two bills of exchange; he afterward placed one of the notes for a thousand francs and three rouleaux of one hundred francs on the back of the papers; then he said, pointing with his finger to the money and bills, "There is what is due to you from the forty thousand francs; my client has ordered me to collect the bill of costs."

The viscount had with great difficulty contained himself while Ferrand arranged his accounts. Instead of answering him and taking the money, he cried, in a voice trembling with anger, "I ask you, sir, why you said to me, respecting the bank bills that I have just given you, *that there were such things as false bills!*"

"Why?" "Yes."

"Because I have sent for you here concerning a forgery." And the notary planted his green glasses full on the viscount. "And how does this forgery affect me?"

After a moment's pause Ferrand said, with a sad and severe manner,—

"Are you acquainted with the duties of a notary?" "The duties are perfectly clear to me, sir. I had just now forty thousand francs; I have now remaining but thirteen hundred." "You are very jocose, sir. I tell you, that a notary is to temporal affairs what a confessor is to spiritual ones; from his profession he often knows ignoble secrets."

"What next, sir?"

"He is often obliged to be in relation with rogues."

"Go on, sir."

"He ought, as much as in his power, to prevent an honourable name from being dragged in the mire."

"What have I in common with all this?"

"Your father has left you a respected name, which you dishonour!"

"What do you dare to say?

"Save the interest that this name inspires to all honest people' instead of being cited here before me, you would have been at this moment before the police."

"I do not comprehend you."

"About two months since, you had discounted, through the agency of a broker, a bill for fifty-eight thousand francs, drawn by the house of Meulaert & Co., of Hamburg, in favour of

William Smith, and payable in three months, at Mr. Grimaldi's, banker in Paris."

"Well!" "This bill is a forgery."

"That is not true."

"This bill is a forgery! the house of Meulaert has never contracted any engagement with William Smith; they do not know him."

"Can it be true!" cried Saint Remy, with as much surprise as indignation; "but then I have been horribly deceived, for I received this bill as ready money." "From whom?" "From William Smith himself; the house of Meulaert is so well known, I knew so well the probity of William Smith, that I accepted this bill in payment of a debt he owed me."

"William Smith has never existed; it is an imaginary person." "Sir, you insult me!" "His signature is as false as the others." "I tell you, that William Smith does exist; but I have, without doubt, been the dupe of a horrible breach of confidence."

"Poor young man!"

"Explain yourself!" cried Saint Remy, whose anxiety and humiliation were increased by the ironical pity of the notary. "In four words, the actual holder of the bill is convinced that you have committed the forgery." "Sir!" "He pretends to have the proof; two days ago he came to me to beg me to send for you here, and to propose to return you this forged draft, under an arrangement. So far, all was fair; this is not; and I only tell you for information. He asks one hundred thousand francs. To-day even, or to-morrow at noon, the forgery will be made known in the proper quarter."

"This is indeed an indignity!" "And what is more, an absurdity. You are ruined. You were prosecuted for a sum that you have just paid me, from some resource I do not know of: this is what I told to this third party. He answered, 'that a certain great lady, who is very rich, would not leave you in this embarrassment.'" "Enough, enough!" "Another indignity! another absurdity! we agree." "In short, sir, what do they want?" "Unworthily to take advantage of an unworthy action. I have consented to make this proposition known to you, in branding it as an honest man ought to brand it. Now it is your affair. If you are guilty, choose between the court of assize or the terms proposed. My part is altogether official. I will have nothing

more to do with so dirty a business. The third party's name is Petit Jean, oil merchant; he lives on the banks of the Seine, Quai de Billy. Settle with him. You are worthy of each other, if you are a forger, as he affirms."

Saint Remy had entered the notary's with an insolent voice and lofty head. Although he had committed in his life some disgraceful actions, there remained in him still a certain pride of lineage—a natural courage which had never failed him; at the commencement of this conversation, regarding the notary as an adversary quite unworthy of him, he treated him with contempt.

When Ferrand spoke of forgery, the viscount felt himself crushed. He found the notary had the advantage. Except for his great self-command, he could not have concealed the impression made upon him by this unexpected accusation! for the consequences might be most fatal to him, of which even the notary had no idea.

After a moment's reflection and silence, he determined—he, so proud, so irritable, so vain of his bravery—to throw himself on the mercy of this vulgar man, who had so rudely spoken the austere language of probity. "Sir, you give me a proof of interest for which I thank you; I regret the harshness of my first words," said he, in a cordial manner. "I do not interest myself in you at all," answered the notary, brutally. "Your father was honour itself; I did not wish to see his name in the court of assizes, that's all."

"I repeat to you I am incapable of the infamy of which I am accused." "You can tell that to Petit Jean." "But I avow that the absence of Smith, who has so unworthily taken advantage of my good faith, places me in a cruel position; I am innocent; let them accuse me, I will prove it; but such an accusation always injures a gallant man." "What next?" "Be generous enough to use the sum I have just paid you to quiet, in part, this third person."

"This money belongs to my client—it is sacred."

"But in two or three days I will repay you."

"You cannot do it." "I have resources." "None available, at least. Your furniture, your horses no longer belong to you; which to me has the appearance of fraud." "You are very hard, sir. But admitting this, will I not turn every thing into money, in such a situation so desperate? Only as it is impossible

for me to procure between this and to-morrow one hundred thousand francs, I conjure you, employ this money to withdraw this unhappy bill. Or you, who are so rich, make me an advance; do not leave me in such a position." "I make myself responsible for a hundred thousand francs to you? Ah, now! are you, then, a fool?" "Sir, I supplicate you, in the name of my father, of whom you have spoken, be so kind as to—" "I am kind for those who deserve it" said the notary rudely; "an honest man; I hate rogues; and I should not be sorry to see one of you fine gentlemen, who are without law or gospel, impious and debauched, some nice time, standing in the pillory as an example to others. But I hear your horses are very restless, Viscount," said the notary, smiling, and showing his black teeth.

"At this moment some one knocked at the door. "Who is it?" asked Ferrand. "The Countess d'Orbigny," said the clerk. "Beg her to wait a moment." "She is the stepmother of the Marchioness d'Harville," cried Saint Remy.

"Yes. She has an appointment with me; so good-morning." "Not a word of this, sir!" said Saint Remy, in a threatening tone. "I have told you, sir, that a notary was as discreet as a confessor."

Ferrand rang the bell, and the clerk appeared.

"Show in Madame d'Orbigny." Then addressing the viscount, "Take these fifteen hundred francs, sir; 'twill be so much on account with Petit Jean."

Madame d'Orbigny (formerly Madame Roland) entered at the moment the viscount went out, his features contracted with rage for having uselessly humiliated himself before the notary.

"Ah! good-morning, Monsieur Saint Remy," said Madame d'Orbigny; "It is a long time since I have seen you."

"Yes, madame; since the marriage of D'Harville, of which I was a witness, I have not had the honour to meet you," said Saint Remy, bowing, and suddenly assuming a most smiling and affable expression. "Since then you have always remained in Normandy?" "Oh, yes. Mr. d'Orbigny cannot live now but in the country; and where he lives, I live. Thus you see in me a true provincial. I have not been in Paris since the marriage of my dear step-daughter with the excellent Mr. d'Harville. Do you see him often?" "D'Harville has become very savage and very morose. I meet him very seldom in society," said Saint

Remy, with a shade of impatience; for this conversation was insupportable, both from its inopportuneness, and because the notary seemed to be much amused. But the stepmother of Madame d'Harville, enchanted at this encounter with an elegant, was not the woman to let her prey escape so easily. "And my dear stepdaughter," continued she, "is not, I hope, as savage as her husband?" "Madame d'Harville is very fashionable, and always much sought after, as a pretty woman should be; but I fear, madame, I trespass on your time, and—" "Not at all, I assure you. I am quite fortunate to meet the elegant of elegants, the king of fashion; in ten minutes I shall know all about Paris, as if I had never left it. And your dear friend, de Lucenay, who was with you, a witness of the marriage of d'Harville?" "More of an original than ever; he set out for the east, and he returned just in time to receive yesterday morning a thrust from a sword; of no great harm, however." "The poor duke! and his wife, always beautiful and ravishing?" "You know madame, that I have the honour to be one of her best friends; my testimony on this subject would be suspected. Will you, madame, on your return to Aubiers, do me the honour to remember me to d'Orbigny?"

"He will be very sensible of your kind recollections, I assure you, for he often asks after you and your success. He says you remind him of the Duke de Lauzun." "This comparison alone is quite an eulogium; but, unfortunately for me, it is much more kind than true. Adieu, madame; for I dare not hope that you will do me the honour to receive me before your departure." "I should be grieved that you should take the trouble to call upon me. I am for a few days at an hotel; but if, this summer or winter, you pass our way to some of the fashionable chateaus, grant us a few days only by way of contrast, and to rest yourself with some poor country-folks from the giddy round of the chateau-life, so elegant and so extravagant; for it is always a fête where you go."

"Madame—" "I need not tell you how happy d'Orbigny and myself would be to receive you; but adieu, sir: I fear that the benevolent humourist," pointing to the notary, "will become tired of our talk." "Just the contrary, madame, just the contrary," said Ferrand, in an accent which redoubled the restrained rage of the viscount." "Acknowledge that Mr. Ferrand is a terrible man," continued Madame d'Orbigny; "but take care, since he is, for-

tunately for you, charged with your affairs, he will scold you furiously; he is without pity. But what do I say? A man like you to have Mr. Ferrand for notary—is a sign of amendment; for every one knows he never lets his client commit any follies without informing them of it. Oh! he does not wish to be the notary of every one." Then addressing Ferrand, she said, "Do you know, Mr. Puritan, that this is a superb conversion you have made here —to render wise and prudent so elegant a young man!" "It is quite a conversion, madame; the viscount leaves my cabinet altogether different from what he entered it." "When I say you perform miracles, it is not astonishing you are a saint." "Ah, madame, you flatter me," said Ferrand.

Saint Remy profoundly saluted Madame d'Orbigny: then at the moment of leaving the notary, wishing to try a last effort to soften him, he said in a careless manner, which nevertheless disclosed profound anxiety,

"Decidedly, my dear Ferrand, you will not grant me what I ask?" "Some folly, without doubt; be inexorable, my dear Puritan," cried Madame d'Orbigny, laughing. "You hear, sir; I cannot act contrary to the advice of so handsome a lady." "My dear Ferrand, let us speak seriously of serious things, and you know that this is so. You refuse decidedly?" asked the viscount, with anguish he could not conceal. The notary was cruel enough to appear to hesitate; Saint Remy had a moment of hope. "How, man of iron, you recede?" said the stepmother of Madame d'Harville, laughing: "you submit also to the charms of the irresistible?" "Faith, madame, I was on the point of yielding, as you say, but you made me blush for my weakness," said Ferrand; then turning to the viscount with an expression of which he comprehended all the signification, he contiuned: "There, seriously, it is impossible; I will not suffer that, through caprice, you should commit such an absurdity. I regard myself as the mentor of my clients; I have on other family, and I should regard myself as an accomplice of any errors I should allow them to commit." "Oh! the Puritan," cried Madame d'Orbigny. Saint Remy left in a state of desperation. After a moment's thought, he said, "It must be." Then addressing the chasseur, who held open the door of the carriage, "To the Hotel de Lucenay."

CHAPTER XX.

THE WILL.

MADAME D'ORBIGNN was a little slender blonde with eyebrows almost white, and pale blue eyes almost round; her speech honeyed, her look hypocritical, her manners insinuating and insidious, "What a charming young man is the Viscount Saint Remy? said she to Ferrand, when the viscount had gone.

"Charming—but, madame, let us talk of business; you wrote me from Normandy that you wished to consult me on some grave affairs." "Have you not always been my adviser, since the good Doctor Polidori referred me to you? Apropos, have you heard from him?" asked Madame d'Orbigny in a careless manner.

"Since his departure from Paris, he has not written me once," answered the notary no less indifferently. These two personages lied most boldly to each other. The notary had seen Polidori recently (one of his two accomplices), and had proposed to him to go to Asnieres, to the Martial's, the fresh water pirates, under the name of Dr. Vincent, to poison Louise Morel. The stepmother of Madame d'Harville came to Paris expressly to have a conference with this scoundrel, who now went by the name of Cèsar Bradamanté.

"But it is not concerning the good doctor," said Madame d'Orbigny: "you seem much troubled; my husband is sick; he grows worse daily. Without causing me serious fears, his condition troubles me, or rather, troubles him," continued she, wiping her tearless eyes. "What is the matter?" "He continually speaks of his final arrangements—of his will." Here Madame d'Orbigny hid her face in her handkerchief for some moments. "That is sad, doubtless," said the notary; "but his precaution is not alarming: what are his intentions, madame?" "You know well, when he touches on this subject, I change it." "But, has he said nothing positive?" "I believe, said Madame d'Orbigny, in a most disinterested manner, "I believe he wishes, not only to give me all the law allows—but—oh! hold, I beg you, let us not speak of this." "What shall we speak of?"

"Alas! you are right, relentless man; we must return to the sad subject which brought me here. Well, Mr. d'Orbigny carries his kindness so far as to wish to convert a part of his fortune and give me a considerable sum." "But his daughter—his daughter?'

cried Mr. Ferrand, with severity, "I ought to tell you that, for a year past, Mr. d'Harville has given me charge of his affairs. I have lately bought for him a magnificent property. You know my roughness in business: it imports little to me that Mr. d'Harville is my client; that which I plead is the cause of justice; if your husband takes towards his daughter a determination which seems to me not proper, I tell you plainly, he must not count on me. Straight forward: such has always been my line of conduct." "And mine also: Thus I repeat to my husband always, just as you have said: 'Your daughter has treated you badly; so be it; but that is no reason to disinherit her.'" "Very well—all right; and what did he answer?"

"He answered, 'I shall leave my daughter twenty-five thousand francs, of rents. She had more than a million from her mother; her husband has an enormous income; can I not leave the rest to you, my tender friend, the sole support, the sole consolation of my old age, my guardian angel?' I repeat these two flattering words," said Madame d'Orbigny, with a modest sigh; "to show his goodness towards me; yet I have always refused his offers seeing which, he decided to beg me to come to you." "But I do not know Mr. d'Orbigny." "But he, like every one else, knows your probity." "But how did he address you to me?" "To silence my scruples, he said, 'I do not propose you to consult my notary you will think him too much under my orders; but I will leave it to the decision of a man whose honesty is proverbial. If he finds your delicacy compromised by your acceptance of my offer, we will talk no more about it; if not, you acquiesce.' I consent, said I, and in this way you have become our arbitrator. 'If he approves,' added my husband, 'I will send him full power to realize, in my name, my property in rents and securities; he will keep this sum on deposit, and, after my death, my kind friend, you will at least, have an income worthy of you.'"

Never, perhaps, had Ferrand felt more the value of his spectacles than at this moment. Without them, Madame d'Orbigny would have seen how his eyes sparkled at the word deposit. He answered, however, in a cross tone: "This is troublesome; this is for the tenth or twelfth time that I have been chosen arbitor, always under pretext of my probity: that is the only word in their mouths—my probity! it only gives me trouble and—" "My good Ferrand, come, don't scold; then you will, write to d'Orbigny; he

awaits your letter, to send you his full power to realize the sum." "How much is it?" "He said, I believe, that it was about four or five hundred thousand francs." "The amount is not so large as I thought; after all you have devoted yourself to Mr. d'Orbigny. His daughter is very rich—you have nothing—I can approve of this; it appears to me, you might accept."

"Really, you think so?" said Madame d'Orbingy, dupe, like every one else, of the proverbial honesty of the notary, and who had not been undeceived in this respect by Polidori. "You may accept," said he. "I will accept, then," said Madame d'Orbigny, with a sigh.

The clerk knocked at the door. "Who is it?" demanded Ferrand. "The Countess M'Gregor." "Let her wait a moment," "I leave you, then, my dear Ferrand," said Madame d'Orbigny; 'you will write, to my husband since he desires it, and he will send you full power to-morrow." "I will write." "Adieu, my worthy and good counsellor."

"Ah! you do not know, you people of the world, how disagreeable it is to take charge of such deposits—the responsibility which bears on us. I tell you,— there is nothing more detestible than this fine reputation for probity, which brings you nothing but drudgery." "And the admiration of good people."

"Thank God! I place otherwise than here below the recompense I seek for," said Ferrand in a sanctified tone.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE COUNTESS M'GREGOR.

Sarah entered the cabinet of the notary with her habitual coolness and assurance; Ferrand did not know her; he was ignorant of the object of her visit; he observed her very closely, in the hope to make a new dupe, and notwithstanding the impassibility of her marble face, he remarked a slight tremour, which appeared to him to betray a concealed embarrassment.

The notary arose from his chair and handed a seat to the countess, saying, "You asked for a meeting, madame, yesterday; I was so much occupied that I could not send you an answer until this morning; I make you a thousand excuses." "I desired to

see you on an affair of the greatest importance. Your reputation has made me hope my business with you will be successful."

The notary bowed in his chair. "I know that your discretion is well tried." "It is my duty madame." "You are a rigid and incorruptible man." "Yes, madame." "Yet, if one would say to you, it depends on you to restore to life—or more than life—reason to an unhappy mother, would you have the courage to refuse?" "State facts, madame, I will answer." "About fourteen years since, a man, young and in mourning, came to propose to you to take for an annuity the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand francs for a child of three years, whose parents desired to remain unknown."

"Continue, madame," said the notary, avoiding a direct answer. "You consented to receive this amount and to assure the child an income of eight thousand francs; the one half of this amount was to be added to the capital until its majority; the other half was to be paid by you to the person who should take charge of this little girl." "Continue, madame." "At the end of two years," said Sarah, without being able to conquer a slight emotion, "this child died." "Before continuing this conversation, madame, I shall ask you what interest you have in this affair?" "The mother of this little girl is my sister; I have here, for proof of what I advance, the publication of the death of this poor little thing, the letters from the person who had care of her, the obligation of one of your clients, with whom you placed the fifty thousand crowns." "Let me see these papers, madame." Quite astonished not to be believed at her word, Sarah drew from her portfolio several papers, which the notary closely examined. "Ah, well; Madame, what do you want? The notice of the death is all in order, the fifty thousand crowns became the property of Mr. Petit Jean, my client, by the death of the child; as to the interests, they were always punctually paid by me until its decease." "Nothing can be more correct than your conduct in this affair; sir, I am pleased to acknowledge it. The woman to whom the child was confided has also a right to our gratitude: she has taken the greatest care of my poor little niece." "That is true, madame; I was so much pleased with her conduct, that, after, the death of the child, I took her into my service; she is still there." "Madame Seraphin is in your service?" "For fourteen years as housekeeper." "Since it is thus, she can be of great assistance, if you will grant a demand which will ap-

pear strange, perhaps, even culpable at first; but when you shall know with what intention—"

"A culpable demand, madame! I do not think you are any more capable of making than I am of hearing it."

"I know, that you are the last person to whom one should address such a request; but I place all my hopes—my sole hope—in your pity. In every case I rely on your discretion." "Yes, madame." "I continue, then. The death of this poor little girl, has cast her mother into such a state of desolation, her grief is as lively at the present day as it was fourteen years since; and after having feared for her life, to-day we fear for her reason."

"Poor mother!" said Ferrand with a sigh.

"Oh! yes, very unfortunate: for she could only blush at the birth of her daughter, at the time she lost her; while now circumstances are such, that if her child still lived, she could own her, be proud of her, never leave her. Thus, this incessant regret, joined to other griefs, makes us fear for her reason." "Unfortunately, nothing can be done for her." "Yes, sir." "How, madame?" "Suppose some one should come and say to the poor mother, 'Your child was supposed to be dead; she is not; the woman who had care of her infancy can affirm it.'"

"Such a falsehood would be cruel, madame. Why cause vain hopes to this poor mother?"

"But if it was not a falsehood; or, rather, if this supposition could be realized?"

"By a miracle? If it only needed to obtain it, my prayers joined to yours, I should pray from the bottom of my heart. Alas! there can be no doubt of her death."

"My God! I know it, the child is dead; and yet, if you wish it, the evil is not irreparable." "It is an enigma, madame." "I will speak then more plainly. Let my sister find to-morrow her child, not only will she be restored to health, but, what is more, she is sure to marry the father of this child, now as free as she is. My niece died at six years. Separated from her parents at this tender age, they have no recollection of her. Suppose that a young girl of seventeen could be found; that my sister should be told, 'Here is your child; you have been deceived: certain interests required that she should be thought dead. The woman who took charge of her, a respectable notary will affirm, will prove to you that it is she—'"

Ferrand, after having allowed the countess to speak without interrupting her, rose suddenly, and cried in an indignant manner, "Enough, madame. Oh, this is infamous!" "Sir." "To dare to propose to me—to palm off a child—a criminal action! It is the first time in my life that I have received such an outrage, and I have not deserved it—you know it." "But who is wronged by it? My sister and the person she desires to marry are single; both regret bitterly the child they have lost; to deceive them! it is to restore to them happiness—life; it is to assure to some forsaken young girl a most happy lot: thus it is a noble and generous action, and not a crime!" "Truly," cried the notary, with increasing indignation, "I see how the most execrable projects can be coloured with—" "But, sir, reflect." "I repeat to you, madame, that it is infamous. It is a shame to see a woman of your rank contriving such abominations, to which, your sister, I hope, is a stranger." "Sir!" "Enough, madame, enough; I am not gallant, not I, I tell you the truth." Sarah cast on the notary one of her dark looks, and said, coldly, "You refuse?" "No new insult, madame!" "Take care!" "Threats?" "Threats! and to prove to you that they will not be in vain, learn, in the first place, that I have no sister." "How, madame?" "I am the mother of this child." "You?"

"I invented this fable to interest you. You are without pity; I raise the mask. You want war! well, war;" "War? because I refuse to lend myself to a criminal act; what audacity;" "Listen to me; your reputation as an honest man is great—known far and near." "Because it is merited. Thus you must have lost your reason before you would have dared to make such a proposition."

"Better than any one I know, sir, how much one ought to suspect these reputations of such strict virtue, which often conceal the gallantries of women and the scoundrelism of men." "You dare to say this, madame?" "Since the commencement of our conversation, I do not know wherefore, I doubt that you deserve the consideration and esteem which you enjoy." "Truly, madame, this doubt does honour to your ingenuity." "Is it not so? for this doubt is founded on nothing—on instinct—on inexplicable presentiments; but rarely has this boding deceived me."

"Let us finish this conversation, madame."

"Before we do so, know my determination. I begin by telling

you, from me to you, that I am convinced of the death of my poor child; but, no matter, I will pretend she is not dead; the most unlikely actions are often brought. You are at this moment in such a position that you must have many envious rivals; they will regard it as a piece of good fortune to attack you. I will furnish them." "You;" "I, in attacking you under an absurd pretext, on an irregularity in the decease of—no matter, I will maintain my child is not dead. As I have the greatest interest in having it believed that she still lives, although lost, this process will serve me in giving much notoriety in this affair; a mother who reclaims her child is always interesting: I shall have on my side those who are envious of you, your enemies, and all those who are feeling and romantic." "This is as foolish as wicked; Why should I? for what interest should I say your child is dead, if she were not?" "That is true, the motive is sufficiently embarrassing. Happily, the lawyers are there; But a thought ah, an excellent one; wishing to divide with your client the sum paid for the annuity, you have caused the child to be carried off."

The notary, without moving a muscle of his face, shrugged his shoulders. "If I had been criminal enough to do that, instead of sending her off, I would have killed her;" Sarah shuddered with surprise, remained silent for a moment, then resumed with bitterness: "For a holy man, that is a thought of crime profoundly deep. Have I then touched to the quick in shooting at random? You see what kind of a woman I am—I crush without pity all those who cross my path. Reflect well; to-morrow you must decide; you can do with impunity what you are asked. In his joy, the father of my child would not discuss the probability of such a resurrection, if our falsehoods, which will render him so happy, are adroitly combined. He has, besides, no other proofs of the death of our child, than what I wrote him fourteen years since; it will be easy for me to persuade him that I deceived him on this subject; for then I had just cause of complaint against him. I will tell him that in my anger I wished to break, in his eyes the last link which still held us together. You cannot then in any way be compromised: affirm that all has been concerted between you and me and Madame Seraphin, and you will be believed. As to the money placed with you, that concerns me alone. It shall remain with your client, who must be

ignorant of all this; finally, you shall fix yourself your own recompense."

Ferrand preserved all his sang froid, notwithstanding his position, so strange and dangerous for him. The countess, believing really in the death of her child, came to propose to him to represent as living this child, whom he had himself passed for dead fourteen years before. He was too cunning he knew too well the perils of his situation, not to comprehend the bearing of Sarah's threats. Although admirably constructed, the edifice of the notary's reputation was built on sand. The public as easily detach as they attach themselves, and are pleased with the right to trample under foot those whom they once had exalted to the skies. How foresee the consequences of the first attack on the reputation of Ferrand? However ridiculous this attack might be, its boldness alone might awaken suspicion.

The pertinacity of Sarah, her obduracy, alarmed the notary. This mother had not shown for a moment any feeling in speaking of her child; she had only seemed to consider her death as the loss of a means of action. Such dispositions are implacable in their objects, and in their vengeance. Wishing to give himself time to seek some means to avoid the dangerous blow, Ferrand said coldly to Sarah, "You have asked until noon to-morrow. It is I madame, who give you until the next day to renounce a project, of which you know not the gravity. If, from this time to that, I have not received a letter from you, in which you announce that you have abandoned this foolish and criminal undertaking, you will learn to your cost, that justice knows how to protect honest people who refuse to lend themselves to culpable acts."

"That is to say, sir, that you demand one day more to reflect on my propositions? That is a good sign; I grant it you. After to-morrow, at this hour, I shall return here, and it shall be between us peace or war; war to the knife, without mercy or pity;" and Sarah disappeared. "All goes well," said she to herself. "This miserable young girl, for whom Rodolphe was so much interested —thanks to the Borgnesse, who has delivered me from her, is no longer to be feared.

"The address of Rodolphe, has saved Madame d'Harville from the snare I placed for her; but it is impossible she can escape from the new plot I have contrived; she will then be for ever lost to him. Then, sad, discouraged, isolated from all ties, will

he not desire any thing better than to be the dupe of a falsehood, to which with the aid of the notary, I can give every appearance of truth! And the notary will assist me, for I have alarmed him. I can easily find a young girl, interesting and poor, who, instructed by me, will fill the part of our child, so bitterly regretted by Rodolphe. I know the grandeur, the generosity of his heart. Yes, to give a name, a rank to her whom he believes to be his daughter, until then unhappy and abandoned, he will renew those ties which I had thought indissoluble. The predictions of my nurse will at length be realized, and I shall have, this time, surely attained the constant aim of my life—a crown." Hardly had Sarah left the mansion of the notary, than Mr. Charles Robert entered it, descending from an elegant cabriolet; he turned towards the private cabinet, as one having the privilege of entry.

CHAPTER XXII.

MR. CHARLES ROBERT.

THE commandant, as Madame Pipelet called him, entered without any ceremony the notary's office, whom he found in a very thoughtful and splenetic mood, and who said to him very roughly, "I reserve the afternoon for my clients; when you wish to speak to me, come in the morning." "My dear scrivener (this was one of the pleasantries of Mr. Robert), it is concerning an important affair, in the first place, and then I wish to assure you myself concerning the fears that you might have." "What fears?" "Do you not know, then?" "What?" "My duel." "Your duel?" "With the Duke de Lucenay. How, are you ignorant of it?" "Yes." "Ah, bah!" "And why this duel?" "Something very serious, which required blood. Just imagine that, in the face of the whole embassy, the duke allowed himself to say to me, to my face, that I had the pituite!" "What did you have?" "The pituite, my dear scrivener; a complaint that must be very ridiculous." "You fought for this?" "And what the devil would you have one to fight for? Do you think, then, that one could, in cold blood, hear one's self accused of having the pituite? And before a charming woman too; what is more, before a little marchioness, who, in short—enough: it could not be overlooked." "Certainly."

"We soldiers, you understand, we are always on the look-out. My seconds the day before yesterday, had an interview with those of the duke. I had the question placed very plainly: a duel or a retraction." "A retraction of what?" "Of the pituite, which he allowed himself to attribute to me." The notary shrugged his shoulders. "On their side the seconds of the duke said, 'We render justice to the honourable character of Mr. Robert; but the duke cannot, ought not, wishes not to retract.' 'Then gentlemen,' responded my seconds, 'the duke still continues to insist that Mr. Robert has the pituite?' 'Yes, gentlemen; but he does not intend it as an attack upon the honour of Mr. Robert.' 'Then let him retract.' 'No, gentlemen; the duke recognises Mr. Robert for a brave man, but he insists that he has the pituite." "You see there was no way of arranging so serious an affair." "None. You were insulted in that which a man holds to be most respectable." "Is it not so? Thus they agreed on the day and hour of meeting, and yesterday morning, at Vincennes, all passed in the most honourable manner. I touched the duke slightly in the arm with my sword; the seconds declared my honour satisfied. Then the duke said, in a loud voice, 'I never retract before an affair; afterward, it is different: it is, then, my duty to proclaim that I falsely accused Mr. Robert of having the pituite. Gentlemen, I confess, not only that my loyal adversary has not the pituite, but I affirm that he is incapable of ever having it.' Then the duke extended his hand to me cordially, saying, 'Are you content? Henceforth we are friends in life until death!' I answered, that I owed him as much. The duke has done everything that was right. He might have said nothing at all, or contented himself with saying that I had not the ague, but to affirm that I never could have it, was a very delicate proceeding on his part."

"This is what I call courage well employed. But what do you want?" "My dear *guard-notes* (another pleasantry of Mr. Robert), it concerns something of great importance to me. You know that, in our agreement, when I advanced you 350,000 francs, in order that you might finish the purchase of your notaryship, it was stipulated that, by giving you three months' notice, I could withdraw from you this amount, for which you now pay interest."

"What next?" "Well!" said Mr. Robert, with hesitation.

"I—no—but—it is that—" "What?" "You perceive, it is pure caprice; an idea to become a landed proprietor, dear scrivener."

"Explain yourself, then; you annoy me!" "In a word, I have been offered a territorial acquisition, and if it is not disagreeable to you, I should wish, that is to say, I should desire to withdraw my funds from you; and I come to give you notice, according to our agreement." "Ah, ah!" "It does not make you angry, I hope?" "Why should it?" "Because you may think—" "I may think?" "That I am the echo of rumours." "What rumours?" "No, nothing; absurdities." "But tell me, then?" "It is no reason because there are reports in circulation about you—" "About me?" "There is not a word of truth in it—that you have been doing some bad business; pure scandal, no doubt. It is like when we speculated on the Change together. This report soon fell to the ground; for I wish that you and I might become—" "Then you think your money is no longer safe with me?" "Yes, yes; but I prefer to have it in my own hands." "Wait for me, then."

Ferrand shut the drawer of his bureau, and arose. "Where are you going to, my dear *guard-notes?*" "To look for something to convince you of the truth of the rumours concerning me," said the notary, ironically. And opening a little private staircase which led to the pavilion, without going through the office, he disappeared.

Hardly had he gone when the clerk knocked at the door.

"Come in," said Mr. Robert. "Is not Mr. Ferrand here?"

"No, my worthy friend."

"It is a lady, veiled, who wishes to speak to him instantly, for a very pressing business." "Worthy sir, he will return directly; I will tell him this. Is she pretty?"

"One must be a wizard to find this out; she wears a black veil, so thick that her face cannot be seen." "Good, good; I'll take a look at her when I go out." The clerk left the room.

"Where the devil is he gone to?" said Mr. Robert to himself. "If these reports are absurd, so much the better. Never mind, I prefer to have my money. I will buy the chateau they have spoken to me of. There are Gothic towers of the time of Louis XIV.; this will give me the appearance of a lord. It will not be like my affair with this prude of a Madame d'Harville—fine

game. Oh, no, I have not made my expenses, as the old stupid porteress said, with her fantastic periwig. This pleasantry has cost me at least a thousand crowns. It is true, the furniture remains; and I can compromise the marchioness. But here is the scrivener."

Ferrand returned, holding in his hand some papers, which he gave to Mr. Robert. "Here," said he to him, "are three hundred and fifty thousand francs in Treasury notes. In a few days we will regulate the interest. Write me a receipt."

"How!" cried Mr. Robert, stupified. "Ah! now do you think, at least, that I—" "I think nothing." "But—" "This receipt!" "Dear guard-notes?" "Write then; and tell the people who speak to you of my embarrassments, how I answer these suspicions." "The fact is, as soon as this is known, your credit will only be the more solid. But, really, take the money; I cannot use it now; I said in three months."

"Mr. Robert, no one shall suspect me twice."

"You are angry?" "The receipt!" "Zounds!" said Mr. Robert; then he added, in writing the receipt, "There is a lady closely veiled, who wishes to speak to you on some very pressing business. I shall take a good look at her when I pass. Here is your receipt; is it right?" "Very well; now go away by the little staircase." "But the lady?" "It is just to prevent your seeing her." And the notary rung for the clerk, saying to him, "Show the lady in. Adieu, Mr. Robert."

"Well. I must renounce seeing her. No bad feeling, scrivener?" "Believe that." "Well, well! adieu." And the notary shut the door on Mr. Robert."

After a few moments the clerk introduced the Duchess de Lucenay, very modestly dressed, wrapped in a large shawl, her face completely concealed by a thick veil of black lace.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE DUCHESS DE LUCENAY.

The Duchess approached slowly towards the desk of the notary in an agitated manner; he advanced to meet her.

"Who are you, madame, and what do you want with me?"

said the notary, roughly, whose temper, already fretted by the threat of Sarah, was exasperated at the suspicions of Mr. Robert. Besides, the duchess was so modestly dressed, that the notary saw no reason why he should be civil to her. As she hesitated to speak, he said, harshly, "Will you explain yourself, madame?" "Sir," said she in a trembling voice, trying to conceal her face under the folds of her veil. "Can one confide a secret to you of the highest importance?"

"Anything can be confided to me, madame; but I must see and know to whom I speak." "Sir, that perhaps is not necessary. I know that you are honour and loyalty itself." "Just so, madame, just so; there is some one there—some one waiting. Who are you?" "My name is of no importance, sir. One of my friends—of my relations—has just left you." "His name?" "Florestan de Saint Remy." "Ah!" said the notary, and he cast on the duchess an inquisitive and searching glance; then resumed; "Well, madame?" "Saint Remy has told me everything, sir." "What did he tell you?" "All!" "But what did he say?" "Ah! you know it well." "I know many things about Saint Remy." "Alas! a terrible thing." "I know a great many terrible things about Saint Remy." "Ah! sir, he told me truly. You are without pity." "For cheats and forgers like him, I am without pity. This Saint Remy, is he your relation? Instead of confessing it, you ought to blush. Do you come here to weep, to soften me? It is useless; without saying that you are performing a wretched part for an honest woman, if you are one." This brutal insolence was revolting to the pride and patrician blood of the duchess. She drew herself up, threw her veil back, and with a proud look, and a firm, imperious voice, she said, "I am the Duchess of Lucenay, sir."

This woman assumed then so great an air, her appearance became so imposing, that the notary, overcome, charmed, fell back astonished, took off mechanically his black silk cap, and saluted her profoundly.

Nothing could be, in fact, more graceful, more majestic, than the face and demeanour of the duchess; yet she was then over thirty years of age, with a pale face, and appeared slightly fatigued; but then she had large sparkling brown eyes, splended black hair, a fine arched nose, a proud and ruby lip, dazzling complexion, very white teeth, a tall and slender figure, a form like a *goddess*

in the clouds, as the immortal Saint Simon says.

She had entered the notary's as a timid woman; all at once she showed herself a grand, proud, and irritated lady. Never had Ferrand in his life met with a woman of so much insolent beauty, of a beauty at once so bold and so noble. Although old, ugly, mean, and sordid, Ferrand was as capable as any one else of appreciating the style of beauty of the duchess. His hatred and his rage against Saint Remy augmented with his admiration of the charming duchess; he thought to himself that this gentleman forger, who had almost kneeled before him, inspired such love in this grand lady, that she risked a step which might ruin her. At these thoughts the notary felt his audacity, which for a moment was paralyzed, restored. Hatred, envy, a kind of burning, savage resentment kindled in his looks, on his forehead, on his cheeks—the most shameful, the most wicked passions. Seeing the duchess on the point of commencing a conversation so delicate, he expected on her part some expedients. What was his surprise. She spoke to him with as much assurance and pride as if it was concerning the most natural thing in the world, and as if before a man of his species she had no thought of the reserve which she had certainly shown to her equals. In effect, the gross insolence of the notary, in wounding her to the quick, had forced the duchess to quit the humble and imploring part that she had at first assumed with much trouble; returned to her own dignity, she believed it to be beneath her to descend to the least concealment with this scribbler of deeds.

"Sir," said the duchess, resolutely. "Saint Remy is one of my friends; he has confided to me the embarrassing situation in which he finds himself, from the inconvenience of a double piece of villany, of which he is the victim. Everything can be managed with money; how much is necessary to terminate these miserable shuffling tricks?"

Ferrand was completely astounded with this cavalier and deliberate manner of opening the business.

"They ask a hundred thousand francs," answered he, as soon as he had recovered from his astonishment. "You shall have your hundred thousand francs; and you will send at once the forged papers to Saint Remy." "Where are the hundred thousand francs, Madame?" "Did not I tell you that you should have them?" "They must be had to-morrow, before noon, madame,

otherwise a complaint of forgery will be made." "Well! give this amount; I will be accountable for it; as to you, I will pay you well." "But madame, it is impossible." "You will not tell me, I hope, that a notary like you cannot procure a hundred thousand francs, from one day to the next."

"And on what security, madame?" "What does that mean? explain yourself." "Who will be answerable for that amount?" "I." "But, madame—" "Is it necessary for me to tell you that I have a property yielding eighty thousand livres rent, at four leagues from Paris? That will suffice, I believe, for that which you call guarantee?" "Yes, madame, by means of a mortgage." "What does that mean again? Some formality, doubtless. Make it, sir, make it." "Such a deed cannot be drawn up under two weeks, and it needs the consent of your husband, madame." "But this is my property, mine alone," said the duchess, impatiently. "No matter, madame: you are in the power of your husband, and a deed of mortgage is very long and very minute." "But once more, you cannot make me believe that it is so difficult to procure 100,000 francs in two hours."

"Then, madame, apply to your own notary, to your steward; as to me, it is impossible." "I have reasons, to keep this a secret," said the duchess, heartily. "You know the rogues who wish to rob Saint Remy; it is on this account I address myself to you." "Your confidence infinitely honours me madame; but I cannot do what you ask." "You have not this amount?" "I have much more than this sum in bank bills, or in gold—here—in my bureau." "Oh! how many words! is it my signature you wish? I give it to you; let us finish." "In admitting, madame, that you are the duchess of Lucenay—" "Come in an hour's time to the Hotel de Lucenay; I will sign at home what is necessary to be signed." "But the duke, will he sign also?" "I do not comprehend you." "Your signature alone is of no value to me, madame." Ferrand enjoyed with cruel delight the impatience of the duchess, who under this appearence of sang froid and disdain, concealed the most painful anguish. She was for a moment at the end of her resources. The evening previous, her jeweller had lent her a large sum on her diamonds, some of which were confided to Morel, the artisan. This sum had served to day the bills of Saint Remy, to disarm other creditors. Dubreuil, the farmer at Arnouville, was more than a year in advance, and, besides, time was

wanting; unfortunately, two of her friends, to whom she could have had recourse in an extreme situation, were then absent from Paris. In her eyes, the viscount was innocent; he had told her and she believed it, that he was the dupe of two rogues; but her situation was none the less terrible.

He accused, dragged to prison! Then, even if he should take to flight, would his name the less be dishonoured by such a suspicion?

"Since you possess the sum I ask for, and that, after all, my guarantee is sufficient, why do you refuse me?"

"Because men have their caprices as well as women, madame." "But what is this caprice, which makes you act thus against your interest? for, I repeat to you, make your conditions; whatever they may be, I accept them."

"You will accept all the conditions, madame?" said the notary, with a singular expression. "All! two, three, four thousand francs—more if you will! for, look, I tell you," added the duchess, frankly, in a tone almost affectionate, "I have no resource but in you alone. It will be impossible for me to find elsewhere that which I ask you for to-morrow; and it must be—you understand—it must be absolutely: thus, I repeat to you, whatever conditions you impose on me for this service, I accept: cost what it may—" * * * * * * * * * *

In his blindness, he had interpreted in an unworthy manner the last words of the duchess.—It was a thought as stupid as it was infamous; but we have already said that sometimes Ferrand became a tiger or a wolf; then the beast overpowed the man. He arose quickly and advanced towards the duchess; she, thunderstruck, rose at the same moment, and regarded him with astonishment. "You will not regard the cost?" cried he, in a broken voice, approaching still nearer to the duchess. "Well! this sum I will lend to you on one condition—and I swear that—" He could not finish his declaration.

By one of these strange contradictions of human nature, at the sight of the hideous face of Ferrand, at the mere thought of what his conditions might be, the duchess, notwithstanding her inquietudes, her troubles burst out into a laugh so frank, so loud, so merry, that the notary recoiled back confounded.

Then, without giving him time to utter a word, the duchess, abandoning herself more and more to her hilarity, pulled down

her veil, and between two renewed bursts of laughter, said to the notary, who was almost blind with rage, hatred, and fury, "I prefer, upon the whole, to ask this favour frankly of the duke." She then went out, continuing to laugh so loud that, though the door of the cabinet was closed, the notary could still hear her.

Ferrand returned to his senses only to curse his imprudence bitterly. Yet, by degrees he reassured himself in thinking that the duchess could not speak of this interview without gravely compromising herself.

Nevertheless, it was a bad day for him. He was buried in the blackest thoughts, when the private door of his cabinet was opened, and madame Seraphin entered wildly :—

"Ah! Ferrand!" cried she, clasping her hands, "you were right enough in saying that we should some day, perhaps, regret having spared her life." "Whose?"

"This cursed little girl's."

"How?" "A one-eyed woman, whom I did not know, and to whom Tournemine had delivered the little girl to rid us of her, fourteen years ago, when we said she was dead—ah! who would have thought it!" "Speak, then!" "This woman has just been here; she was below just now. She told me she knew it was I who gave up the child." "Malediction! who could have told her? Tournemine is at the galleys."

"I denied every thing treating her as a liar. But, bah; she maintains that she has found this child again, who is now grown up; that she knows where she is, and that it only depends upon herself to discover everything."

"But is hell unchained against me to-day?" cried the notary in a fit of rage that rendered him hideous.

"But what shall be said to the woman? what must we promise her to keep her silent?" "Does she look as if she were poor?"

"As I treated her like a beggar, she shook her reticule; there was money in it."

"And she knows where this young girl is now?" "She declares she knows."

"And she is the daughter of the Countess M'Gregor?" said the notary to himself; "and just now she offered me so much to to say that her child was not dead. And the child lives. I can restore her to her. Yes, but this false act of decease;—if any inquiry is made, I am lost. This crime may put them

on the scent of others." After a moment's thought, he said to Madame Serapin, "This one-eyed woman knows where this young girl is?" "Yes."

"And this woman will return to-morrow?" "Write to Polidori to be here to-night at nine o'clock."

* * * * * *

At the close of this day, Rodolphe said to Murphy, who had not been able to see the notary—

"Let the Baron de Graün send a courier off at once. Cecily must be in Paris in six days."

"Once more, this infernal she-devil! the execrable wife of poor David, as handsome as she is infamous! for what good, my lord?"

"For what good! Sir Walter Murphy? In a month's time you shall ask this question of the notary, Jacques Ferrand."

THE MYSTERIES OF PARIS.

PART V.

CHAPTER I.

THE DENUNCIATION.

Towards ten o'clock in the evening of the day on which Fleur de Marie had been carried off by La Chouette and the Brigand, a man on horseback arrived at the farm, coming, as he said, on the part of Mr. Rodolphe, to reassure Madame Georges as to the disappearance of her young protégée, who would return to her in a few days. "For several very important reasons," added this man, "Mr. Rodolphe begged Madame Georges, in the event of her having anything to send him, not to write to him at Paris, but to hand the letter to the courier, who would take charge of it.

This courier was an emissary of Sarah's.

By this 'ruse,' she tranquilised Madame Georges, and retarded, thus, for some days, the moment when Rodolphe must hear of the abduction of Marie. In this interval, Sarah hoped to force the notary to favour the unworthy scheme of which we have spoken. This was not all. Sarah wished, also, to get rid of Madame d'Harville, who inspired her with serious fears, and who would have been lost, save the presence of mind of Rodolphe.

The day after the marquis had followed his wife to the house in the Rue du Temple, Tom went there, easily set Madame Pipelet jabbering, and learned that a young lady, on the point of being surprised by her husband, had been saved, thanks to the address of a lodger in the house, named Rodolphe. Informed of this circumstance, Sarah, possessing no material proof of the rendezvous that Clemence had given to Mr. Robert, conceived another odious plan. It was concocted to send another anonymous letter to the marquis, in order to effect a complete rupture between him and Rodolphe, or, at least, to make the marquis

so suspicious as to forbid any farther intercourse between the prince and his wife.

The letter was thus couched:

"You have been deceived most shamefully. The other day, your wife, advised that you were following her, pretended an imaginary visit of charity; she went to a rendezvous at a very *august personage's*, who has hired, in the Rue du Temple, a room in the fourth story, under the name of Rodolphe. If you doubt these facts, strange as they may appear, go to the Rue du Temple, No. 17, and inform yourself: paint to yourself the features of the *august person* spoken of, and you will easily acknowledge that you are the most credulous, good-natured husband who has ever been so *sovereignly* deceived. Do not neglect this advice; otherwise it will be supposed that you, also, are too much

"THE FRIEND OF THE PRINCE."

This note was put in the post at five o'clock by Sarah, on the day of her interview with the notary. The same evening, Rodolphe went to pay a visit to the Ambassadress de * * *; after which it was his intention to go to Madame d'Harville's to announce to her that he had found a *charitable intrigue* worthy of her. It will be seen, that this young lady, in showing herself generous and compassionate towards her husband, whom she had, until then, treated with extreme coldness, followed, already, the noble counsels of Rodolphe.

The marquis and his wife had just left the table; the scene passed in the little saloon, of which we have spoken; the expression of Clemence was affectionate and kind; Mr. d'Harville seemed less sad than usual. He had not yet received the new and infamous letter of Sarah. "What are you going to do to-night?" said he, mechanically, to his wife. "I shall not go out; and yourself, what are your plans?" "I do not know," answered he with a sigh; "society is insupportable to me. I will pass this evening, like so many other evenings, alone." "Why alone, since I am not going out?" The marquis looked at his wife with surprise. "Doubtless, but—" "Well." "I know you often prefer solitude, when you do not go out." "Yes; but as I am very capricious," said Clemence, smiling, "at present I prefer to partake my solitude with you, if it is agreeable to you." "Really," cried the marquis, with emotion, "how kind you are to

anticipate what I dared not to express." "Do you know, my friend, that your astonishment has almost an air of reproach?" "Oh, no, no; not after my unjust and cruel suspicions the other day; to find you so forgiving, it is, I confess, a surprise to me; but a surprise the most delightful."

"Let us forget the past," said she to her husband, with an angelic smile. "Clemence, can you forget?" answered he, sadly. "Have I not dared to suspect you? to tell you to what extremity a blind jealousy has impelled me? But what is all this compared to other wrongs, still greater, more irreparable?"

"Let us forget the past, I say," repeated Clemence, restraining her emotion.

"What do I hear? the past, also, can you forget it?"

"I hope to do so." "Can it be true, Clemence, you can be so generous? but no, no; I cannot believe in so much happiness; I had renounced it for ever." "You were wrong, you see."

"What a change! my God! Is it a dream? Oh, tell me I am not mistaken." "No, no; you are not mistaken."

"And, truly, your look is less cold; your voice almost falters. Oh, say; is it, then, true? Am I not under an illusion?"

"No; for I also have need of pardon." "You?"

"Have I not been cruel towards you? Ought I not to have thought that you must have needed a rare courage, a virtue more than human, to act differently from what you did? Isolated, unhappy, how resist the desire of seeking some consolations in a marriage which pleased you? Alas! when one suffers, one is so disposed to believe in the generosity of others. Your error has been, until now, to count on mine. Well, henceforth, I will try to give you reason."

"Oh, speak, speak once more," said the marquis, his hands clasped in a kind of ecstasy. Our existence is for ever united. I will do all in my power to render your life less bitter." "My God! Is it you I hear?" "I beg you, do not be so much astonished; it gives me pain; it is a bitter censure on my past conduct. Who, then, should lend you a friendly and helping hand, if it is not I? A happy inspiration I have received. I have well reflected on the past—on the future. I have seen my errors, and I have found, I believe, the means to repair them."

"Your errors, my poor wife?" "Yes; I should have, the next day after our marriage, appealed to your honour, and

frankly demanded a separation." "Ah, Clemence, pity." "Otherwise, since I accepted my position, I should have augmented it by submission, instead of causing you constant self-reproach by my haughty and taciturn coldness. I should have endeavoured to console you for a fearful malady, by only remembering your misfortune. By degrees, I should have become attached to my work of commiseration, by reason even of the cares, perhaps the sacrifices, which they would have cost me; your gratitude had rewarded me, and then—but, my God! what is the matter? you weep!" "Never, more than at this minute, have I comprehended how culpable I have been in chaining you to my sad destiny."

"And never have I felt more decided to forget. These gentle tears that you shed, make me acquainted with a happiness of which I was ignorant. Courage then, my friend! in default of a fortunate and smiling destiny, let us seek our satisfaction in the accomplishment of the serious duties that that fate imposes. Let us be indulgent one to the other; if we falter, let us regard the cradle of our child, let us concentrate on her all our affections, and we shall yet have some joys, melancholy and holy."

"You are an angel," cried the marquis, joining his hands, and looking at his wife with affectionate admiration. "Oh! you do not know the pain and pleasure you cause me, Clemence; you do not know that your harshest words formerly, your most severe reproaches, alas! the most merited, have never so much overwhelmed me as this adorable goodness, this generous resignation, and yet, in spite of myself, you make hope spring up again." "And you can place entire faith in what I tell you, Albert. This resolution is taken firmly; it shall never fail, I swear it you. Before long I may give you new guarantees of my word." "Guarantees!" cried he, more and more excited by happiness so unlooked for, "guarantees! have I need of them? Your look, your voice, this beaming expression of goodness which still graces you, the throbbings of my heart, all prove to me, that what you say is true? But you know, Clemence, man is insatiable in his hopes," added the Marquis. "Your noble and touching words give me courage to hope, yes, to hope what yesterday I regarded as an insensate dream." * * * *

"Albert, I swear to you I shall always be the most devoted of friends, the most tender of sisters; but nothing more. Pardon

me, if, unknowingly, my words have ever given you hopes which can never been realized." "Never?" cried the Marquis, fixing on her a desperate and supplicating look. "Never!" answered Clemence. This single word, the tone of voice, revealed an irrevocable resolution. Clemence, brought back to noble resolutions by the influence of Rodolphe, was firmly resolved to surround her husband with the most touching attentions; but she felt that she was incapable of ever loving him. An impression still stronger than fright, than contempt, than hatred, separated Clemence from her husband for ever. It was a repugnance, invincible. After a moment of mournful silence, he passed his hand over his eyes, and said to his wife, bitterly,

"Pardon me for deceiving myself; pardon me for having abandoned myself to a hope mad as it was foolish. Ah! I am very unfortunate." "My friend," said Clemence to him gently "I do not wish to reproach you; yet do you reckon as nothing my promise to be to you the most tender of sisters? You will owe to the most devoted friendship, attentions that love could not give you. Hope for better days. Until now you have found me almost indifferent to your sorrows; you shall see how I shall compassionate you, and what consolations you will find in my affection." A valet entered, and said to Clemence, "His Royal Highness, the grand Duke of Gerolstein, asks if the marchioness will receive him?" Clemence looked at her husband, who, recovering his *sang froid*, said to her, "Why, doubtless." The valet retired. "Pardon me, my friend," said Clemence; "I did not say that I would not receive him. Besides, it is a long time since you have seen the prince; he will be happy to find you here. I shall also be much pleased to see him; yet I avow, that just now I am so agitated, that I should have preferred to receive his visit some other day." "I can comprehend it; but what could we do? Here he is." At this moment Rodolphe was announced.

"I am a thousand times happy, madame, to have the honour to meet you," said Rodolphe; "and I doubly appreciate my good fortune, since it also procures me the pleasure of seeing you, my dear Albert," added he, turning towards the marquis whom he cordially shook by the hand. "It is a long time, my lord, since I have had the honour to pay you my respects." "And whose fault is it, Mr. Invisible? The last time I came to pay my respects to Madame d'Harville, I asked for you; you were absent.

It is now three weeks that you have forgotten me; it is very wrong." "Be merciful, my lord," said Clemence, smiling; "the Marquis is so much the more culpable, since he has for your highness the most profound respect, and he might make this be doubted by his negligence." "Well! see my vanity, madame; whatever the Marquis might do, it would always be impossible for me to doubt his affection; but I ought not to say this. I am encouraging him in such conduct." "Believe me, my lord, that some unforeseen circumstances alone have prevented me from profiting oftener by your kindness towards me." "Between ourselves, my dear Albert, I believe you a little too platonic in friendship: very sure that you are loved, you are not pliant enough to give or receive proofs of attachment." Through a breach of etiquette, which rather annoyed Clemence, a valet entered, bringing a letter to the Marquis. It was the anonymous denunciation of Sarah, which accused the prince of being her lover.

The Marquis, out of deference to the prince, pushed back with his hand the little silver plateau which the servant handed him, and said, in an under tone, "Not now, not now." "My dear Albert," said the prince, in the most affectionate tone, "don't stand on ceremony with me." "My lord—"

"With the permission of Madame d'Harville, I beg you to read this letter."

"I assure you, my lord, that there is nothing pressing." "Once more, Albert—read this letter." "My lord—" "I entreat you—I wish it." "Since your royal highness requires it," said the marquis, taking the letter from the plateau.

"Certainly. I require that you treat me as a friend."

Then, turning towards Clemence, while he broke the seal of this fatal letter—the contents of which Rodolphe could not have imagined—he added, smiling, "What a triumph for you, madame, to cause this will, so stern, always to cede!" The Marquis drew near to one of the candelabras on the chimney-piece, and opened the letter of Sarah.

Rodolphe and Clemence conversed together, while he twice read the letter. His countenance remained composed; a nervous trembling, almost imperceptible, agitated his hands alone; then, after a moment's hesitation, he put the note into the pocket of his waistcoat. "At the risk of passing for a savage," said he to Rodolphe, smiling, "I shall ask permission to answer this

letter—more important than I at first thought." "Shall I not see you again to-night?" "I do not think that I can have the honour; I hope your royal highness will excuse me." "What a man!" said Rodolphe, gaily. "Will you not try to retain him, madame?" "I dare not attempt what your highness has attempted in vain." "Seriously, my dear Albert, try to return to us as soon as your letter is written; if not, promise to grant me an interview some morning—I have a thousand things to say to you." "Your royal highness overwhelms me," said the marquis, bowing profoundly as he retired.

"Your husband is pre-occupied," said Rodolphe to Clemence; "his smile appeared constrained."

"When your royal highness arrived, he was profoundly affected; he had great trouble to conceal it."

"I have arrived, perhaps, at an inopportune moment?" "No, my lord. You have even spared me the conclusion of a painful conversation." "How is that?" "I have told him the new line of conduct that I was resolved to follow, promising him support and consolation." "How happy he should be!"

"At first he was as much so as myself; for his tears, his joy, produced an emotion to which I had, as yet, been a stranger. Formerly I thought I revenged myself by addressing him with reproach and sarcasm. Sad revenge! my sorrow afterward has only been more bitter. While just now—what a difference! I asked my husband if he was going out; he answered me sadly —that he should pass the evening alone, as was usually the case. When I offered to remain with him—if you could have seen his astonishment! how his expression, always sad, became at once radiant. Oh! you were right—nothing more pleasing than to contrive these surprises of happiness."

"But how did these proofs of goodness on your part lead to this painful conversation of which you have spoken?"

"Alas!" said Clemence, blushing, "to these hopes succeeded hopes more tender, which I was very guarded not to excite, because it will always be impossible for me to realize them."—

"I comprehend; he loves you tenderly."

"As much as I was at first touched with his gratitude, so much was I alarmed at his protestations of love. I could not conceal my alarm. I caused him a sad blow in manifesting thus my invincible repugnance to his love. I regret it. But, at least, he is

now for ever convinced that he has only to expect from me the most devoted friendship."

"I pity him, without being able to blame you; there are susceptibilities thus to speak which are sacred. Poor Albert, so good, so kind! If you knew how much I have been afflicted, for a long time past, with his sadness and dejection, although ignorant of the cause. Let us leave all to time, to reason. By degrees he will recognise the value of the affection you offer him, and he will be resigned to it, as he was resigned before having the touching consolations which you offer him." "And which shall never be wanting, I swear to you." "Now let us think of the other unfortunates. I have promised you a good work, having all the charm of a romance in action. I come to fulfil my engagement."

"Already: what happiness!" "Ah! it was a kind of happy inspiration that induced me to take that poor room in the house of the Rue du Temple of which I have spoken to you. You cannot imagine all that I find curious and interesting. In the first place, your protégées of the garret enjoy the comforts your presence had promised them; they have, however, yet to undergo some sad trials; but I do not wish to make you sad. Some day you shall know how many horrible calamities may overwhelm one single family." "What must be their gratitude towards you,' "It is your name they bless." "You have succoured them in my name?" "To render the charity sweeter to them. Besides, I have only realized your promises." "Oh! I will go and undeceive them: tell them it is to you they owe—"

"Do not do that; you know I have a room in this house: be guarded against any new cowardly acts of your enemies, or of mine: and since the Morels are now out of the reach of want think of others. Let us think of our *intrigue*. It concerns a poor mother and her daughter who, formerly in affluence, are at this time, in consequence of an infamous spoliation, reduced to the most frightful misery." "Unfortunate women! and where do they live?" "But how did you find out their situation?"

"Yesterday I went to the Temple, to make some purchases with my neighbour of the fourth story." "Your neighbour?" "Have I not my room in the Rue du Temple?"

"I forgot it, my lord," "This neighbour is a charming little grisette, who calls herself Rigolette; she is always laughing, and never had a lover." "What virtue for a grisette." "It is not

exactly from virtue that she is virtuous, she says she has no time to be in love; for she must work from twelve to fifteen hours a day to gain twenty-five sous, on which she lives." "She can live on so small an amount?" "How now! she has even articles of luxury; two birds, who eat more meat than she does; her little room is as neat as possible, and her dress really quite coquettish." "Live on twenty-five sous a day! she is a prodigy." "A real prodigy of order, labour, economy, and practical philosophy, I assure you; thus I recommend her to you. She is, she says, a very skilful; sempstress. At all events, you will not be obliged to wear the clothes she makes for you." "To-morrow I will send her some work. Poor girl! to live on so small a sum, and, thus to speak so unknown to us, who are rich, whose smallest caprices cost a hundred times that amount!" "You will interest yourself—then, in my little protégée, agreed; let us return to our other adventure." Here Rodolphe related to her what occured in the Temple, the finding of the letter in the old secretaire, and the story told by the old woman concerning it. "And do you not know their abode?"

"Unfortunately no. But I have given orders to De Graün to endeavour to discover it, even if he is obliged to apply to the prefecture of police. It is probable that, stripped of everything, the mother and daughter have sought refuge in some miserably furnished lodgings. If it should be so, we have some hope, for the landlord's report every evening the strangers who arrive in the course of the day." "What a singular concurrence of circumtances:" said Clemence, with astonishment. "This is not all. In a corner of this letter, found in the old secretaire, were these words, 'Write to Madame de Lucenay,'" "What good fortune; perhaps we can find out something from the duchess," cried Clemence, with vivacity; then she continued with a sigh. "But I am ignorant of the name of this woman—how designate her to Madame de Lucenay?" "You must ask her if she does not know a widow, still young, of a distinguished appearance, and whose daughter, aged sixteen or seventeen, is named Claire." "I remember the name. The name of my daughter: it seems to me a motive the more to interest me in their misfortunes."

"I forgot to tell you that the brother of this widow committed suicide some months ago." "If Madame de Lucenay knows this family," said Madame d'Harville, "such information will suffice to bring them to her mind. Oh! how desirous I am of going

to see her. I will write her a note, so that I shall be sure to find her to-morrow morning. Who can these women be? From what you know of them, they appear to belong to the upper classes of society. And to find themselves reduced to such distress: Ah! for them poverty must be doubly frightful."

"And that by the robbery of a notary, a miserable scoundrel of whom I already know many other misdeeds—Jacques Ferrand." "My husband's notary!" cried Clemence; "the notary of my stepmother! But you are deceived, my lord; he is looked upon as one of the most honourable men in the world."

"I have proofs to the contrary. But do not, I pray you, say a word on the subject to any one: he is as crafty as he is criminal, and to unmask him, I have need that he shall not suspect, or rather, that he shall go on with impunity a short time longer. Yes; it is he who has despoiled these unfortunates, by denying a deposit which, by all appearances, had been placed in his hands by the brother of this widow." "And this sum?" "Was their sole resource. Oh! what a crime!" cried Rodolphe; "a crime that nothing can excuse—neither want nor passion. Often does hunger cause robbery, vengeance, murder. But this notary was already rich; and clothed by society with a character almost holy, which imposes, forces confidence, this man is induced to crime, by a cold and implacable cupidity. The assassin only kills you once, and quickly with his knife: he kills you slowly, by all the horrors of despair and misery into which he plunges you. For a man like this Ferrand, the patrimony of the orphan, the savings of the poor—nothing is sacred. You confide to him gold; this gold tempts him; he makes you a beggar, and wretched. By the force of privations and toil, you have assured to yourself bread, and an asylum for your old age; *the will* of this man tears away from your old age this bread and shelter. This is not all. See the effects, the fearful effects of these infamous spoilations: this widow of whom we speak may die of sorrow and distress; her daughter, young and handsome, without support, without resources, accustomed to a competency, unfit, from her education to gain a living, soon finds herself between starvation and dishonour: she is lost! By this robbery, Ferrand is the cause of the death of the mother, the ruin of the child; he has killed the body of one and the soul of the other: and this, not at once, like other homicides, but slowly and with cruelty."

Clemence had never yet heard Rodolphe speak with so much bitterness and indignation; she listened in silence, struck with these words of eloquence doubtless, very sad, but which discovered a vigorous hatred of evil. "Pardon me, madame," said Rodolphe, after a moment's pause; "I cannot restrain my indignation in thinking of the cruel fate which your future protégées may have realized. Ah! believe me, the consequences of ruin and poverty are very seldom exaggerated."

"Oh! on the contrary, I thank you, my lord, for having by these terrible words, still more augmented, if that is possible, the sincere commiseration I feel towards these unfortunates. Alas! it is above all for her daughter she must suffer; oh, it is frightful. But we will save them—we will assure them as to the future; is it not so? Thank God! I am rich, but not as much as I could wish; now I foresee a new use for money; but, if it is necessary, I will speak to the marquis; I will make him so happy that he cannot refuse any of my new caprices. Our protégées are proud you say: I like them better for it: pride in misfortune always proves an elevated mind. I will find the means to save them, without their knowing that they owe the succour they receive to a benefactor. It will be difficult; so much the better. Oh, I have already a project; you shall see, my lord, that I am not wanting in address and cunning."

"I already foresee the most Machiavelian combinations," said Rodolphe, smiling. "But we must first discover them: how I wish it was to-morrow. On leaving Madame de Lucenay I will go to their old lodgings; I will question their neighbours; I will see for myself; I will ask information from everybody, I shall be so proud to obtain by myself alone, the result I desire; oh! I will succeed; this adventure is so touching. Poor women; it seems to me I feel more interest in them when I think of my child."

Rodolphe, touched with this charitable eagerness, smiled sadly in seeing this young woman of twenty, so handsome, so lovely, trying to forget in noble occupations the domestic troubles which afflicted her; the eyes of Clemence sparkled with vivacity, her cheeks were slightly suffused; the animation of her gesture, of her speech gave new attraction to her ravishing physiognomy.

CHAPTER II.

THE SNARE.

CLEMENCE perceived that Rodolphe was contemplating her in silence. She blushed, cast down her eyes: then raising them in charming confusion, she said, "You laugh at my enthusiasm? It is because, I am impatient to taste those holy joys which are about to reanimate my existence, until now sad and useless. Such, without doubt, was not the life I dreamed of; there is a sentiment, a happiness, more lively still that I can never know; although still very young, I must renounce it!" added Clemence, suppressing a sigh. "But thanks to you, my preserver, I have created for myself other interests; charity shall replace love. I am already indebted to your advice for such touching emotions. Your words have so much influence. The more I meditate, the more I reflect on your ideas, the more I find them just, great, and fruitful. Oh! how much goodness your mind discloses. From what source have you, then, drawn these feelings of tender commiseration?" "I have suffered much, I still suffer; this is the reason I know the cause of many sorrows."

"You, my lord, you unhappy!" "Yes; to prepare me to solace all kind of sorrows, fate has willed I should undergo them all. A lover, it has struck me through the first woman that I loved with all the blind confidence of youth; a husband, through my wife; a son, it has struck me through my father; a father through my child."

"I thought that the grand-duchess did not leave you any child?" "She did not; but before my marriage with her I had a daughter, who died very young. Well! strange as it may appear to you, the loss of this child whom I had hardly seen, is the sorrow of my life. The older I become, the more profound my regrets. Each year redoubles the bitterness. It seems to increase as her years would have increased. Now she would have been seventeen."

"And her mother, does she still live?" asked Clemence.

"Oh! do not speak of her!" cried Rodolphe. "Her mother is an unworthy creature, a being bronzed by egotism and ambition. Sometimes I ask myself if it were not better my child should be dead, than to have remained in the hands of her mother."

Clemence experienced a kind of satisfaction in hearing Rodolphe

express himself thus. "Oh! I conceive, then," cried she, "that you regret doubly your daughter?" "I should have loved her so well, and besides, it seems to me that among us princes there is always in our love for a son a kind of interest of race and name; but a daughter! she is loved for herself alone. And when one has seen, alas, humanity under the most sinister aspects, what delight to contemplate a pure and lovely being, to inhale her virgin purity, to watch over her with tender care. A mother the most fond, the most proud of her daughter cannot experience this feeling; she is herself too similar to taste these ineffable delights: she will appreciate much more the manly qualities of a bold and noble boy. For in short, do you not find that that which renders, perhaps, still more touching the love of a mother for her son, a father for his daughter, is, that there is always in these affections a feeble being who has need of protection? The son protects the mother, the father protects the daughter." "Oh, it is true my lord." "But, alas! why understand the ineffable joys, when one can never experience them?" said Rodolphe, dejectedly.

"But pardon me, madame; my regrets and my souvenirs have, in spite of myself, carried me away; you will excuse me?"

"Ah, my lord! believe I partake of your sorrows. Have I not the right? Have you not partaken of mine? Unfortunately, the consolations that I can offer you are in vain."

"No, no; the expression of your interest is sweet and salutary to me. It is weakness, but I cannot hear a young girl spoken of without thinking of her whom I have lost."

"These thoughts are so natural! Hold; since I have seen you, I have accompanied, in her visits to the poisons, a lady of my acquaintance, who is a patroness of the work of the young women who are confined at Saint Lazare; this house contains many very culpable beings. If I were not a mother, I should have judged them, doubtless, with still more severity, while I now feel for them pity; much softened in thinking that, perhaps, they had not been lost, except for the state of poverty and neglect they had been in from their infancy. I do not know why, but after these thoughts it seemed to me I loved my child the more."

"Come, courage," said Rodolphe, with a melancholy smile; "this conversation leaves me quite re-assured as to you. A salutary path is open to you; in following it, you will pass through without stumbling, these years of trial, so dangerous for women

and, above all, for a woman gifted as you are ; your reward shall be great ; you will still have to struggle, to suffer—for you are very young—but you will renew your strength in thinking of the good you have done—of that which you still will do."

Clemence burst into tears. " At least," said she, " your assistance, your counsels, will never fail me : is it not so?" " Far and near, I shall always take the most lively interest in all that concerns you ; always, as much as depends upon me, I will contribute to your happiness ; to that of the man to whom I have vowed the most constant friendship."

" Oh ! thank you, for this promise," said Clemence, drying her tears ; " without your generous support, my strength would abandon me ; but believe me, I swear it here, I will constantly accomplish my duty." At these words, a small door concealed behind the tapestry was opened roughly, Clemence uttered a cry. Rodolphe shuddered. The marquis appeared pale, and profoundly affected ; his eyes were wet with tears. The first astonishment over, the marquis said to Rodolphe, giving him Sarah's letter, " my lord, here is the infamous letter which I received just now before you. I pray you to burn it after you have read it."

Clemence looked at her husband with alarm.

" Oh, this is infamous !" cried Rodolphe, indignantly.

" Well, my lord, there is something still more infamous than this anonymous scurrility—it is my own conduct !" " What do you mean ?" " A little while ago, instead of showing you this letter frankly, boldly, I concealed it from you ; I pretended to be calm, while I had jealously, anger, and despair in my heart : this is not all. Do you know what I did ? I shamefully went and concealed myself behind this door to listen to you—to spy—yes, I have been wretch enough to doubt your honour. Oh ! the author of this letter knows to whom he addresses it ; he knows how weak my head is. Well, say, after hearing what I have just heard—for I have not lost one word of your conversation, and know why you go to the Rue du Temple—ought I not on my knees, to ask for pardon and pity ? and I do it, my lord. I do it, Clemence ; I have no more hope but in your generosity." " Ah ? my dear Albert, what have I to pardon ?" said Rodolphe, extending both hands with the most touching cordiality. " *Now* you know our secrets, I am delighted. I can preach to you at my leisure. I am your confidant by compulsion,

and what is still better, you are the confidant of the marchioness; you now know all you have to expect from her noble heart."

"And you, Clemence, will you pardon me also?"

"Yes, on condition that you will assist me in assuring your own happiness;" and she extended her hand to her husband, who pressed it with emotion. "Truly, my dear marquis," cried Rodolphe, "our enemies are unlucky; thanks to them, we are only the more intimate from the past. You never have more duly appreciated the marchioness; she has never been more devoted to you; acknowledge that we are well avenged of the envious and wicked. That will answer while waiting for something better, for I divine from whence this came, and I am not accustomed to suffer patiently the injuries done to my friends. But this regards me. Adieu, madame; here is our *intrigue* discovered; you will no longer be alone in assisting your protégées: be assured we will get some new mysterious enterprise, which the marquis must be very cunning to discover." * * * *

After having accompanied the prince to his carriage, to thank him again, the marquis retired to his own apartments without seeing Clemence again.

CHAPTER III.

REFLECTIONS, AND FUTURE PROJECTS.

It would be difficult to describe the tumultuous and contrary sentiments which agitated d'Harville when he found himself alone. He acknowledged with joy the falsity of the accusation against Rodolphe and Clemence, but he was also convinced that he must renounce the hope of being loved by her. The more that, in her conversation with Rodolphe, Clemence had shown herself courageous, resolute to do good, the more be bitterly reproached himself for having, with culpable egotism, linked this unhappy young woman to his fate. Far from being consoled from the conversation he had just heard, he fell into a state of sadness, of inexpressible despondency. There is in a life of opulence without employment this terrible disadvantage; nothing turns its attention, nothing protects the mind from brooding on its sorrows. Never being compelled to occupy itself with the necessities of the future, or the labours of each day, it remains entirely a prey to

great mental afflictions. Being able to possess all that gold can procure, it desires or regrets violently that which gold alone cannot procure.

The grief of d'Harville was desperate, for, after all, he desired nothing but what was just and legal. * * *

To these transports of vain anger succeeded a feeling of gloomy dejection. "Oh," cried he, at once softened and cast down, "it is my fault; poor unhappy woman, I have unworthily deceived her. She can, she ought to hate me; and yet, just now, again, she evinced the most touching interest for me; but, instead of contenting myself with that, my foolish passions have carried me away. I became tender; I have spoken to her of my love; and hardly had my lips touched her hand, than she trembled with affright. If I could still have had any doubt of the invincible repugnance with which I inspire her, what she has just now said to the prince leaves me no illusion. Oh, it is frightful."

"And by what right did she confide to him this hideous secret? it is an unworthy betrayal of confidence. By what right? Alas! by the same right that prisoners have to complain of their executioner. Poor child! so young, so lovely, all that she could find to say that was cruel against the horrible fate to which I had doomed her, is, that such was not the lot she had dreamed of, and that she was very young to renounce love. I know Clemence; the word she has given me, which she has given to the prince, she will, henceforth, keep; she will be for me the most tender sister. Well; my position is not worthy of envy. To the cold and constrained feelings which existed between us, are to succeed the most affectionate and the kindest relations, while she might have continued to treat me with frozen contempt, without my daring to complain. * * * * *

"Another torture! How have I suffered, when I thought her culpable—what terrible agony! But no, this fear is vain; Clemence has sworn not to fail in her duties; she will keep her promise; but at what price? Just now when she returned to me with her affectionate words, how her sad, soft, melancholy smile caused me pain. How much this return to her executioner must have cost. Poor woman, how handsome she looked. For the first time I felt acute remorse, for until then her haughty

coldness was her revenge. Oh, unfortunate man that I am!"

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After a long, sleepless night of bitter reflections, the agitation of d'Harville ceased as by enchantment.

As soon as it was morning he rang for his valet.

Old Joseph, on entering the room, heard his master, to his great astonishment, humming a hunting song, a sign, as rare as it was sure, of his good-humour.

"Ah, my lord," said the faithful servant, quite softened, "what a good voice you have; what a shame you do not sing oftener." "Really, Joseph, have I a good voice?" said d'Harville, laughing. "You might have a voice as hoarse as an owl or a rattle, I should still think you had a good voice." "Hold your tongue, flatterer."

"Why, when you sing, my lord, it is a sign you are contented; and then your voice appears to me the most charming music in the world." "In that case, my old Joseph, learn to open your long ears." "What do you say?"

"You can enjoy this charming music every day."

"You will be happy every day, my lord?" cried old Joseph, clasping his hands with astonished delight. "Every day, my old Joseph, happy every day. Yes; no more sorrow; no more sadness. I can tell this to you, sole and discreet confidant of all my sorrows, I am overjoyed with happiness. My wife is an angel of goodness! she has asked pardon for her past coldness, attributing it to—can you guess? to jealousy!" "To jealousy?"

"Yes; absurd suspicions; caused by anonymous letters."

"What indignity!" "You comprehend? Women have so much self love. It needed nothing more to separate us; but, happily, last night, we had an explanation. I undeceived her; to tell you of her joy would be impossible; for she loves me; oh, how she loves me. Thus this cruel separation has ceased; judge of my joy." "Can it be true?" cried Joseph, with tears in his eyes. "It is true, then, my lord, now you are for ever happy, since the love of your lady, was alone wanting."

"My poor Joseph, do you not possess a still more sorrowful secret? But let us not talk of sorrow, the day is too happy. You see, perhaps, that I have wept; it is thus

happiness overpowers me. I so little expected it. How weak I am. Is it not so?"

"Yes, yes, my lord, you can well weep for joy, you who have wept so much for sorrow. And me, then. Hold! am I not acting as you are? Brave tears! I would not part with them for ten years of my life. I have only one fear, which is, that I shall hardly be able to keep from throwing myself at the feet of the marchioness the first time I see her." "Old fool! you are as unreasonable as your master. Now I have a fear also." "What is it?" "That this will not last; I am too happy; what is wanting?" "Nothing, my lord, absolutely nothing." "It is on this account I am mistrustful of happiness so perfect, so complete." "Alas, it was not for that, my lord— But no, I dare not."

"I understand you. Well; believe me, your fears are vain; the change that my happiness causes me is so great, so profound, that I am almost sure of being saved." "How is that?" "My physician has told me a hundred times, that often a violent mental shock sufficed to give or cure this fatal malady. Why should not emotions of happiness produce the same effect?" "If you believe this, my lord, it will be so—it is so—you are cured. Why, this is, indeed, a blessed day. Ah, as you say, your wife is a good angel descended from heaven; and I begin to be almost alarmed myself; it is perhaps, too much for one day; but I think— Thank God, I have it." "How?" "One of your friends has received, very fortunately and seasonably, as it happens, a sword-cut, not at all serious, it is true; but no matter, it is enough to make you a little sorry; that there may be a little trouble on this happy day. It is true, in regard to that, it had been been better if the thrust had been more dangerous; but we must be contented as it is." "Will you be quiet? And of whom do you speak?" "Of the Duke de Lucenay. He is wounded; a scratch on the arm. The duke came yesterday to see you, and he said he would come this morning and ask for a cup of tea." "Poor Lucenay! And why did you not tell me?" "Last night I was not able to tell you." After a moment's thought, d'Harville replied, "You are right; this light sorrow will doubtless, satisfy, jealous destiny. But an idea has just struck me; I have a mind to have,

this morning, a bachelor's breakfast, all friends of the duke, to congratulate him on the happy result of his duel; he will be enchanted." "Good, my lord. Joy for ever. Make up lost time. How many covers? so that I can give the orders to the steward." "Six; in the little breakfast-parlour." "And the invitations?" "I will go and write them. A man from the stables can take them round on horseback. It is early; they will all be found at home. Ring."

D'Harville entered his cabinet, and wrote the following letters, without any other address than the name of the invited:

"My dear * * *—This is a circular; an impromptu is in agitation. Lucenay is to come to breakfast with me this morning; he counts only on a tête-a-tête; cause him a very agreeable surprise by joining me, and a few other of his friends, whom I have also advised. At noon precisely.

"D'Harville."

"Let some one mount a horse immediately," said d'Harville to a servant who answered the bell, "and take these letters." Then turning to Joseph, he directed him to address them as follows: "Viscount Saint Remy, Lucenay cannot do without him," said d'Harville to himself. "De Monville; one of his travelling companions. Lord Douglas; his faithful partner at whist. The Baron de Sezannes; the friend of his youth. Have you written?"

"Yes, my lord." "Send these letters without losing a moment," said the marquis. "Ah, Phillippe, ask Doublet to come to me." The servant retired. "Well; what is the matter?" asked D'Harville of Joseph, who looked at him with amazement.

"I cannot get over it. I never saw you so gay; and, besides, you, who are commonly so pale, you have a fine colour; your eyes sparkle." "Happiness, my old Joseph, happiness. Ah, now, you must assist me in a scheme. You must go and find out, from Mademoiselle Juliette, she who, I believe, has charge of the diamonds of Madame d'Harville."

"Yes, my lord, it is Mademoiselle Juliette who takes care of them; I helped her, not a week ago, to clean them."

"You go and ask her the name and address of the jew-

eller of her mistress; but she must not say a word on the subject to the marchioness." "Ah, I understand: a surprise."

"Go quickly. Here is Doublet. My dear Doublet, I am going to frighten you," said he, laughing. "I am going to make you utter cries of distress."

"Me, my lord?" "You." "I will do all in my power to satisfy you." "I am going to spend a great deal of money, Doublet—an enormous amount of money. "What of that, my lord? we are able to do it, thank God." "For a long time I am possessed with a notion of building. I have it in contemplation to add a galery in the garden, to the right wing of the hotel. After long hesitation, I have quite decided. You must tell my architect to-day, so that he can come and talk over the plans. Well, Doublet, you don't groan over this expense?" "I can assure you, my lord, I do not groan."

"This gallery will be destined for fêtes; I wish it to be built as it were, by enchantment; now, enchantments being very dear, you must sell 15, or 20,000 livres of rents, to be ready to furnish the funds, for I wish the work commenced as soon as possible." Joseph entered.

"Here is the address of the jeweller; his name is Baudoin." "My dear Doublet, you will go, I beg of you to this jeweller, and tell him to bring here in an hour, a diamond necklace, worth about two thousand louis. Women can never have too many jewels now that dresses are trimmed with them. You will arrange with the jeweller for the payment." "Yes, my lord. It is on account of the surprise that I do not groan this time. Diamonds are like buildings, the value remains: and, besides, this surprise to the marchioness, there is not in the world a happier man than your lordship." "This good Doublet," said d'Harville, smiling; "his felicitations are always so inconceivably apropos."

"This is their sole merit, and they have, perhaps, this merit because they come from the bottom of the heart. I go to the jeweller," said Doublet, retiring.

As soon as he was gone, d'Harville paced the floor of his cabinet, his arms crossed on his breast, his eyes fixed and meditative.

Suddenly his countenance changed: it no longer expressed the content, of which the steward and the old servant had just been the dupes, but a calm, cold, mournful resolution. After having walked some time, he seated himself as if overcome by the weight

of his troubles, with his face buried in his hands. Then he suddenly arose, wiped away a tear which moistened his burning eye-lids, and said, with an effort, "Come, courage."

He wrote letters to several persons about insignificant objects; but in the letter he appointed or put off different meetings several days. This correspondence finished, Joseph came in; he was so gay that he so far forgot himself as to sing. "Joseph, you have a very fine voice," said his master, smiling. "Faith, so much the worse, I did not know it; something sings so loudly within that it must be heard without." "You will put these letters in the post-office." "Yes, my lord; but where will you receive these gentlemen?" "Here in my cabinet; they will smoke after breakfast, and the odour of the tobacco will not reach the marchioness." At this moment the noise of a carriage was heard in the court-yard. "It is her ladyship, who is going out; she ordered her horses this morning at an early hour, said Joseph. "Run, then, and beg her to come here before she goes out." "Yes, my lord."

Hardly had the domestic gone when d'Harville approached a glass and examined himself minutely. "Well, well," said he, in a gloomy tone; "that's right—the cheeks flushed, the eyes sparkling—joy or fear—no matter—as long as they are deceived. Let us see now—a smile on the lips. There are so many kinds of smiles. But who can distinguish the false from the real; who can penetrate under this lying mask, to say, this smile conceals black despair? no one, happily, no one! oh, yes, love could never be mistaken; no, its instinct, would enlighten it. But I hear—my wife. Come, to your post, inauspicious buffoon." "Good-day, Albert, my dear brother," said Clemence, with a sweet smile, and giving him her hand. "But what is the matter, my friend? You appear so happy and gay."

"It is, that at the moment you came in, my dear little sister, I was thinking of you. Besides, I was under the influence of an excellent resolution." "That does not surprise me." "That which took place yesterday, your admirable generosity, the noble conduct of the prince, all this gave me much to think about, and I am a convert to your ideas. You would not have excused me last night if I had too easily renounced your love, I am sure, Clemence." "What language, what a happy change," cried Clemence. "Oh! I was very sure, that in addressing myself to your heart, to your

reason, you would comprehend me. Now I have no longer any doubts for the future."

"Nor I, Clemence, I assure you. Yes, since the resolution I have taken this night, the future, which seemed to me dark and gloomy, has become singularly cleared up—simplified—" "Nothing is more natural, my friend: now we march towards one object, leaning fraternally on each other: at the end of our career we will find ourselves as we are to-day. In short, I desire that you shall be happy, and this shall be so, for I have placed it there," said Clemence, putting her finger on his forehead. Then she resumed, with a charming expression, lowering her hand to his heart: "No, I am mistaken; it is there that this good thought will incessantly watch for you, and for me also; and you shall see, my brother, what is the obstinacy of a devoted heart." "Dear Clemence," answered d'Harville, with constrained emotion; then, after a pause, he added, gaily, "I begged you to come here before your departure, to inform you that I could not take tea with you this morning. ə have a number of persons to breakfast with me: it is a kind of impromptu to congratulate De Lucenay on the happy issue of his duel."

Madame d'Harville blushed in thinking of the cause of this duel; she said to her husband, "See now, what a coincidence: De Lucenay comes to breakfast with you; I go, perhaps very indiscreetly, to invite myself, to do the same with Madame de Lucenay; for I have much to talk to her about my unknown protégées. From there I intend to go to the prison of Saint Lazare, with Madame de Blinval, for you do not know all my ambition; at this moment I am *intriguing* to be admitted in the work for the young prisoners."

"Truly, you are insatiable," said the marquis; "thus," added he, restraining with great difficulty his emotion, "thus I shall see you no more—to-day!" he hastened to add. "Are you vexed that I go out this morning so early?" asked Madame d'Harville, quickly, astonished at the tone of his voice. "If you ask it, I will put off my visit to Madame de Lucenay." The marquis was on the point of betraying himself: he said in the most affectionate manner, "Yes, my dear little sister, I am as much vexed to see you go out, as I shall be impatient to see you return; these are defects I shall never correct myself of."

"And you will do well, my friend; for I should be very an-

gry." A bell announcing a visit resounded throughout the hotel.

"Here are, doubtless, some of your guests," said Madame d'Harville; "I leave you—apropos, what are you going to do to-night? If you have not disposed of your evening, I beg that you will accompany me to the Italians; perhaps, now, music will please you more." "I place myself under your orders with the greatest pleasure." "Are you going out soon? Shall I see you again before dinner?" "I am not going out. You will find me here." "Then, when I return, I will come and see if your bachelor breakfast has been amusing." "Adieu, Clemence." "Adieu, my friend; we shall meet again. I leave you the field clear; I wish you much amusement. Be very gay!" And after having cordially pressed the hand of her husband, Clemence went out by one door a moment before de Lucenay entered by another.

"She wishes me much amusement—she tells me to be gay. To this word adieu, to this last cry of my soul in its agony, to this word of eternal separation, she has added, we shall soon meet again; and she went away tranquilly: smiling: come: this does honour to my dissimulation. By Heavens! I did not think myself so good a player. But here is Lucenay."

CHAPTER IV.

A BACHELOR'S BREAKFAST.

The Duke entered the room; his wound had been so slight that he did not carry his arm in a sling; his countenance was always cheerful and contemptuous, his movements always restless, his mania to make a bustle insurmountable. Yet, notwithstanding his caprices, his pleasantries in very bad taste, he was not a vulgar man, thanks to a kind of natural dignity and courageous impertinence which never abandoned him. "How indifferent you must suppose me to be as regards anything concerning you, my dear Henry!" said d'Harville extending his hand to him; "but it is only this morning I heard of your disagreeable adventure." "Disagreeable! come, now, marquis. I got the worth of my money, as they say. I never laughed so much in my life; this excellent Mr. Robert appeared to be so solemnly determined not to pass for having the ague. Exactly: you don't know it was the cause of the duel? The other night at the embassy of * * *, I asked him,

before your wife and the Countess M'Gregor, how he got on with his ague; for, between us, he had not this inconvenience. But never mind. You understand—to have that said before handsome women, is annoying."

"What folly! I recognise you there! But who is this Mr. Robert?"

"Truly, I don't know anything about him; he is a gentleman whom I met at the watering places; he passed before us in the winter-garden at the embassy; I called him to play off this joke; he answered the second day after by giving me, very gallantly, a nice little thrust with his sword. But don't let us talk of this nonsense. I come to beg a cup of tea." Saying this, the duke threw himself at full length on the sofa; after which, introducing the end of his cane between the wall and the frame of a picture placed over his head, he commenced moving it backward and forward.

"I expected you, my dear Henry, and I have arranged a little surprise for you." "Oh, bah! and what is it?" cried the duke pushing the picture in a very ticklish position.

"You'll end by pulling that picture on your head."

"It is true, by Jove! you have the eye of an eagle. But your surprise, what is it?" "I have sent for some of our friends to breakfast with us." "Ah! good; marquis, bravo! screamed he, striking heavy blows on the sofa cushions. "And whom shall we have? Saint Remy?" "No; he has been in the country for some days. What the devil can he manage to do in the country in winter?" "Are you sure that he is not in Paris?" "Very sure; I wrote to him to be the second; he was absent; I fell back on Lord Douglas and Sezanne." "That is fortunate; they breakfast with us."

"Bravo! cried the duke, anew. Then he turned and twisted himself on the sofa, accompanying his loud cries with a series of somersets that would have astonished a rope dancer. The evolutions of the duke were interrupted by the arrival of Saint Remy. "I have no need to ask if de Lucenay be here," said the viscount, gaily. "He can be heard below." "How! is it you, beautiful sylvan, countryman! wolf's cub?" cried the duke, much surprised; "I thought you were in the country." "I came back yesterday; I received the invitation just now, and here I am, quite delighted at this surprise," and

Saint Remy gave his hand to the duke, and then to the marquis.

"I take this very kind in you, my dear Saint Remy. Is it not natural that the friends of Lucenay should rejoice at the happy issue of this duel, which, after all, might have had a very grievous result?"

"But," resumed the duke obstinately, "what have you been doing in the country in mid-winter, Saint Remy? that puzzles me."

"How curious he is!" said the viscount, addressing d'Harville. "I wish to wean myself from Paris, since I must so soon quit it."

"Ah, yes, this beautiful imagination to attach yourself to the legation of France at Gerolstein. None of your nonsense and stuff about diplomacy; you will never go there. My wife says so, and everybody repeats it." "I assure you that Madame de Lucenay is mistaken, like every one else." "She told you before me that it was a folly." "I have committed so many follies in my life-time!"

"Elegant and charming follies, very well, so as to ruin yourself, as they say, by your 'Sardanapalus' magnificence, I admit that; but to go and bury yourself in such a hole of a court as Gerolstein! Come, now, this is folly, and you are too sensible to do a stupid thing." "Take care, my dear Lucenay, in abusing this German court you will have a quarrel with d'Harville, the intimate friend of the grand-duke, who, besides, received me most kindly the other night at the embassy of * * *, where I was presented to him." "Really, my dear Henry," said d'Harville, "if you knew the grand-duke as I know him, you would comprehend that Saint Remy could have no repugnance to go and pass some time at Gerolstein." "I believe you, marquis, although he is said to be proudly original, your grand-duke; but that doesn't prevent that a beau like Saint Remy, the finest flower among pea blossoms, cannot live, excepting at Paris; his value is only known at Paris."

The other guests of d'Harville had just arrived, when Joseph entered and said some words in a low tone to his master.

"Gentlemen, will you allow me," said the marquis; "it is the jeweller of my wife, who brings me some diamonds to choose for her—a surprise. You know that, Lucenay, we—you and I—are husbands of the old school." "Oh! by Jove, if you talk of a

surprise," cried the duke, "my wife gave me one yesterday; and a famous one, I tell you!" "Some splendid present?" "She asked for a hundred thousand francs." "And as you are a magnificent fellow, you have—" "Lent them! they will be mortgaged on her Arnouville farm—short accounts make long friends. But never mind; to lend in two hours 100,000 francs to some one who wants them, is genteel and rare. Is it not, spendthrift? you who are a connoisseur in loans," said the duke, laughing, without dreaming of the bearing of his speech. Notwithstanding his audacity, the viscount at first slightly blushed; then he said, with effrontery, "One hundred thousand francs! why, it is enormous. How can a woman ever have need of such an amount? As for men, that's another story."

"Faith, I don't know what she wanted with the money. Besides, it is all the same to me. Some bills, probably, some urgent creditors; that's her look out. And, besides, you well know, my dear Saint Remy, that in lending her my money, it would have been the worst taste in the world to ask her what she wanted it for." "It is, however, a very excusable curiosity in those who lend, to wish to know what the borrower wants to do with the money," said the viscount laughing.

"Saint Remy," said d'Harville, "you, who have such an excellent taste, you must aid me in choosing the set I intend for my wife; your approbation will sanction my choice, your approval is the law."

The jeweller entered, carrying several caskets in a large leather bag. "Ah! here is Mr. Baudoin!" said the duke. "At your service, my lord." "I am sure that it is you who ruin my wife with your infernal and dazzling temptations?" said the duke. "The duchess has only had her diamonds re-set this winter," said the jeweller, slightly embarrassed. "I have this moment left them with her grace, on my way here."

Saint Remy knew that the duchess, to come to his assistance, had changed her diamonds for false ones; this conversation was very disagreeable to him, but he said boldly,

"These husbands, how curious they are, Baudoin?" "Curious, faith, no," answered the duke; "it is my wife who pays; she is richer than I am." During this conversation, Mr. Baudoin had displayed on a bureau several admirable necklaces of rubies and diamonds. "How splendid! and these stones, how divinely

they are cut!" said Lord Douglas. "Alas! sir," answered the jeweller, "I employed in this work one of the best artisans in Paris; unfortunately, he has become mad, and I shall never find his equal. My broker tells me that it is probably misery which has turned his brain, poor man." "Misery! and you confide diamonds to a man in poverty?"

"Certainly, and I have never known an instance of an artisan concealing or secreting anything confided to him, however poor he might be." "How much for this necklace?" asked d'Harville.

"Your lordship will remark that the stones are of splendid cutting, and the purest water, almost all of the same size."

"Here are some wordy precautions most menacing for your purse," said Saint Remy, laughing; "expect now, d'Harville, some exhorbitant price." "Come, Baudoin, your lowest price?" said d'Harville. "I do not wish to take any advantage, so I say the lowest is 42,000 francs."

"Gentlemen," cried de Lucenay, "we husbands, let us admire d'Harville in silence. To arrange a surprise for his wife for 42,000 francs! The devil! don't go and noise that abroad; it will be a detestable example." "Laugh as much as you please, gentlemen," said the marquis gaily. "I am in love with my wife, I do not conceal it; I boast of it!" "That is easily seen," said Saint Remy; "such a present speaks more than all the protestations in the world."

"I take this necklace, then," said d'Harville, "If you approve of this black enamel setting, Saint Remy." "It sets off to advantage the brilliancy of the stones; they are beautifully arranged."

"I decide, then, for this necklace," said d'Harville. "You will have to settle with Doublet, my steward, Baudoin." "Doublet has advised me, my lord," said the jeweller, and he went out, after having put in his bag, without counting them, the different sets of jewels which he had brought, and which Saint Remy had for a long time handled and examined during this conversation. D'Harville, in giving the necklace to Joseph, who awaited his orders, whispered to him, 'Mademoiselle Juliette must put these diamonds quietly with those of her mistress, without her suspecting it, so that the surprise will be complete." At this moment the butler announced that the breakfast was served; the guests of the marquis passed into the breakfast room and seated themselves at table.

"Do you know, my dear d'Harville," said de Lucenay, "that this house is one of the most elegant and best arranged in Paris?"

"It is commodious enough, but it wants space; my project is to add a gallery on the garden. Madame d'Harville desires to give some grand balls, and our three saloons are not large enough; besides, I find nothing more inconvenient than the encroachments made by a fête on the apartments which one habitually occupies, and from which, for the time, you are exiled." "I am of your opinion," said Saint Remy; "nothing is in worse taste, more in the citizen fashion, than these forced removals by authority of a ball or concert. To give fêtes really splendid, without any inconvenience to one's self, a particular suite of apartments must be arranged exclusively for them; and, besides, vast and splendid saloons, destined for grand balls, ought to have a different character, and style from the rooms in ordinary occupation; there is between these two species of apartments the same difference as between a splendid fresco and an easel picture." "He is right," said d'Harville; "what a pity that Saint Remy has not twelve or fifteen hundred thousand livres income; what wonders we should enjoy."

"Since we have the happiness to enjoy a representative government," said the duke, "ought not the country to vote a million a year to Saint Remy, and charge him to represent at Paris taste and fashion, which would thus decide the fashion of Europe, and of the world?" "Agreed!" was cried in chorus. "And this million should be annually raised, in form of a tax on these abominable misers who, possessors of enormous fortunes, shall be arraigned, tried, and convicted of living like skin-flints," added the duke. "And as such," said d'Harville, "condemned to defray the magnificence which they ought to display."

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"While waiting for the decision which will legalize the supremacy Saint Remy now exercises, in fact," said d'Harville, "I shall ask his advice for the gallery I am about to construct."

"My feeble lights are at your disposal, d'Harville."

"And when shall this inauguration take place?"

"Next year, I suppose, for I am going to commence immediately."

"What a man of projects you are." "I have many others. I contemplate a complete change at Val Richer."

"Your estate in Burgundy?" "Yes; there are some admirable plans to execute there if God spares my life."

"Poor old man! But have you not lately bought a farm near Val Richer to add to your estate?" "Yes, a very good affair that my notary advised." "And who is this rare and precious notary who advises such good affairs?" "Mr. Ferrand." At this name a slight shade passed over the brow of the viscount. "Is he really an honest man, as he is reputed to be?" asked he, carelessly, of d'Harville, who then remembered what Rodolphe had related to Clemence concerning the notary.

"Jacques Ferrand? What a question! Why, he is a man of antique probity," said the duke. "As respected as respectable." "Very pious—that hurts no one." "Excessively avaricious—which is a guarantee for his client."

"He is, in short, one of our notaries of the old school, who ask you what you take them for when you speak of a receipt for money confided to them." "For no other cause than that, I would confide my whole fortune to him." "But where the devil, Saint Remy, did you get your doubts concerning this worthy man of proverbial integrity?" "I am only the echo of vague rumours, otherwise I have no reason to deny this phœnix of notaries. But to return to your projects, d'Harville: what are you going to build at Val Richer? The chateau is said to be superb."

"You shall be consulted, my dear Saint Remy, and sooner, perhaps, than you think, for I delight in these works; it seems to me there is nothing more pleasant than to have your plans spread out for years to come. To-day this project—in a year this one—still later some other: add to this a charming wife whom one adores, who is the motive in all your plans, and, thus life passes gently enough." "I believe you; it is a real paradise on earth." "Now, gentlemen," said d'Harville, when breakfast was over, if you will smoke a cigar in my cabinet, you will find some excellent ones there."

They arose from table and returned to the cabinet of the marquis; the door of his sleeping apartment, which communicated with it, was open. We have already said that the sole ornament of this room was a panoply of arms. The duke, having lighted a cigar, followed the marquis into his chamber. "Here are some splendid guns, truly; I do not know which to prefer, the French or the English." "Douglas," cried de Lucenay, "come, then, and

see if these guns will not compare with the best Mantons." Lord Douglas, Saint Remy, and two other guests entered the chamber of the marquis to examine the arms.

D'Harville took a pistol, cocked it, and said, laughing, "Here, gentlemen, is the universal panacea for all woes, the spleen, ennui. And he placed the muzzle laughingly to his mouth. "Faith, I prefer another specific," said Saint Remy; "this is only good in desperate cases."

"Yes, but it is so prompt,' said d'Harville. "Click! and it is done; the will is not more rapid. Really, it is marvellous."

"Take care then, d'Harville, these pleasantries are always dangerous, an accident might happen, said the duke, seeing the marquis again place the pistol to his lips.

"Zounds! do you think if it were loaded I would play these tricks?" "Doubtless not, but it is always wrong." "Look here, this is the way they do it; the barrel is introduced delicately between the teeth, and then—"

"My God! how foolish you are, d'Harville, when you are once set a going," said the duke, shrugging up his shoulders.

"The finger is placed on the trigger," added d'Harville.

"Is he not a child—childish at his age?"

"A little movement on the lock," continued the marquis, "and one goes straight to the land of spirits."

With these words, the pistol went off.

The marquis had blown his brains out.

* * * * *

We will renounce the task; we cannot describe the affright, the amazement, of the guests of d'Harville.

The next day the following was seen in the newspapers:—

"Yesterday an event, as unforeseen, as deplorable, agitated the Faubourg St. Germain. One of those imprudences, which lead every year to such fatal accidents, has caused a most lamentable affair. Here are the facts, which we have gathered, the authenticity of which we can guarantee.

"The Marquis d'Harville, possessor of an immense fortune, hardly twenty-six years of age, noted for the elevation of his character and the goodness of his heart, married to a lady whom he adored, had invited a few friends to breakfast. On leaving the table, they passed into the sleeping apartment of the marquis, where was displayed several valuable arms. In showing some

of the guns to his guests, d'Harville, in jest, placed a pistol, which he did not know was loaded, to his lips. In his security, he drew the trigger, it went off! and the unhappy young man fell dead, with his skull fractured! The frightful consternation of the surrounding friends may easily be imagined, to whom, but a moment before, in the bloom of youth, he had just been conversing of his projects for the future. And as if all the circumstances attending this painful event should be more cruel from contrast, the same morning d'Harville, wishing to surprise his wife, had just purchased a valuable necklace. And it is at this moment, when, perhaps, life never appeared more smiling, more desirable, that he falls a victim to a deplorable accident.

"Before such a misfortune, all reflections are useless; we can only remain, as it were, overwhelmed by the inscrutable decrees of Providence."

We quote the papers merely to show that general belief attributed the death of d'Harville to a deplorable accident. It is hardly necessary to say, that he carried with him to the tomb the mysterious secret of his voluntary death. Yes, voluntary; and calculated and meditated with as much sang froid as generosity, so that Clemence could not have the slightest suspicion of the true cause of his suicide.

Thus the project of which d'Harville had conversed with his his friends and his steward, his confidential communications to his old servant, the surprise which he arranged for his wife, were just so many snares laid for public credulity.

How could a man be supposed about to kill himself, who was so much occupied with pains for the future—so desirous of pleasing his wife? His death was then attributed, and could only be attributed, to an imprudence. As to his resolution, an incurable despair had dictated it. * * * * *

"My death alone can dissolve these ties—it must be—I shall kill myself." "And this is the reason why d'Harville had accomplished this grave, this melancholy sacrifice.

If a law of divorce had existed, would he have committed suicide? No. He could have repaired in part the evil he had done; restored his wife to liberty; permitted her to find happiness in another union. The inexorable immutability of the law, then often renders certain faults irremediable; or, as in this case, only allows them to be effaced by a new crime.

CHAPTER VI.

SAINT LAZARE.

IGNORANT of the terrible drama that was passing at home, Madame d'Harville had gone to the prison of St. Lazare, after having obtained some information from Madame de Lucenay concerning the two unhappy woman whom the cupidity of Jacques Ferrand had plunged into distress. Madame de Blinval, one of the patronesses, not being able to accompany Clemence to St. Lazare, she went alone. She was received with much kindness by the director, and by several lady inspectresses, known by their black dresses and a blue riband with a silver medal.

One of these, Madame Armand, a woman of advanced age, of a soft and grave expression, remained alone with Madame d'Harville, in a saloon adjoining the office. * * * * *

She said to Clemence: "Since your ladyship has been kind enough to request me to point out those of our inmates who, from good conduct or sincere repentance, should merit your interest, I believe I can recommend an unfortunate, whom I think more unhappy than culpable; for I do not think I deceive myself in affirming that it is not too late to save this young girl, a poor child of sixteen or seventeen at most."

"And for what has she been confined?"

"She is guilty of being found in the Champs Elysées in the evening. As it is forbidden to those of her class, under very severe penalties, to frequent, either day or night, certain places, and the Champs Elysées are among the number of those prohibited, she was arrested."

"And she appears interesting to you?"

"I have never seen more regular or more ingenuous features. Imagine, madame, a picture of the virgin. That which gave still more to her appearance a most modest expression was, that when she came here she was dressed like a peasant girl of the environs of Paris." "She is, then, a country girl?" "No, madame The inspectors recognised her. She lived in a horrible house in the cité, from which she was absent two or three months; but a she had not demanded to have her name erased from the registers of the police, she remained under the control of the officers wo

sent her here." "But perhaps she left Paris to endeavour to reinstate herself?" "I think so, madame. I felt at once interested in her. I interrogated her as to the past; I asked her if she came from the country, telling her to be of good cheer, if, as I hoped, she wished to return to the paths of virtue."

"What did she reply?" "Lifting on me her large blue, melancholy eyes, and full of tears, she said to me, in a tone of angelic sweetness, 'I thank you, madame, for your kindness, but I cannot speak of the past; I have been arrested—I was wrong—I do not complain.' 'But where do you come from? Where have you been since you left the cité? If you have been to the country to seek an honorable existence, say so; prove it; we will write to the prefect to obtain your discharge. You shall be erased from the police lists, and your good resolutions shall be encouraged.' 'I entreat you, madame, do not interrogate me; I cannot answer you,' she replied. 'But when you leave here, do you wish to return to this horrible house again?' 'Oh, never!' she cried. 'What will you do, then?' 'God only knows!' she replied, letting her head fall on her breast." "This is very strange! She expresses herself—" "In very good terms, madame, her deportment is timid, respectful, but without meanness. I will say more. Notwithstanding the extreme sweetness of her voice and her look, there is at times in her accent, in her attitude, a kind of sorrowful pride which confounds me. If she did not belong to the unhappy class of which she is a part, I should almost think that this pride displays a soul conscious of its elevation."

"And this young girl, whose beauty, language, and manners form such a strange contrast to her past degradation, to her present situation, what are her relations with the other prisoners? If she is endowed with the elevation of mind that you suppose, she must suffer much from associating with her miserable companions?" "Every thing concerning this young girl is a subject of astonishment. Hardly has she been here three days, yet already she possesses a kind of influence over the other prisoners."

"In so a short time?" "They show her not only interest, but almost respect." "How! these unfortunates—"

"Have sometimes an instinct of singular delicacy in perceiving the noble qualities of others; yet they often hate those whose superiority they are obliged to admit."

"And they do not hate this young girl?"

" Far from that, madame; not one of them knew her before she entered here. They were at first struck with her figure. Her features, although of rare beauty, are, it is true, veiled with a touching and unhealthy paleness; this melancholy and sweet face inspired them at first with more interest than jealousy. Then, she became very quiet: another subject of astonishment for these creatures, who, for the most part, endeavour always to drown the voice of conscience by force of noise and tumult. In short, although dignified and reserved, she showed herself compassionate, which prevented her companions from being exasperated at her coldness. This is not all. There has been here, for a month, an unruly creature, called La Louve—so violent, audacious, and ferocious is her character; she is a girl of about twenty, tall, masculine, rather a fine face, but very coarse; we are often obliged to put her in confinement to subdue her turbulence. Only the day before yesterday she came out of the cell, very much irritated at the punishment she had just received. It was the hour of repast; the poor girl of whom I have spoken did not eat; she said, sadly, to her companions, 'Who wants my bread?' 'I' said La Louve, first; 'I,' said a poor deformed creature, called Mont Saint Jean, who serves as a laughing stock, and sometimes, in spite of us, as a butt to the other prisoners. The young girl gave her bread to the latter, to the great rage of La Louve. 'It is I who asked you first,' cried she, furiously. 'It is true, but this poor woman is enciente; she has more need of it than you," answered the young girl. La Louve, nevertheless, snatched the bread from the hands of Mont Saint Jean, and began to vociferate, brandishing her knife. As she is very irascible, and very much feared, no one dared to take the part of poor Goualeuse."

" Why do you call her that name, madame?"

" It is the name, or, rather, surname, under which she has been confined here. Almost all of them have similar borrowed names."

" It is very singular."

" It signifies, in their language, *the singer;* for this young girl has a very fine voice; and her accent is enchanting." " And how did she escape from this villanous La Louve?" " Rendered still more furious by the *sang froid* of La Goualeuse, she ran towards her, with an oath and uplifted knife. All the prisoners screamed with terror. The Goualeuse alone regarded without fear this formidable creature. Smiling bitterly, she said, in her an-

gelic voice, 'Oh! kill me, kill me; I desire it; but do not make me suffer much!' These words were pronounced with a simplicity so touching, that almost all the prisoners had tears in their eyes. "I believe it," said the marchioness, painfully affected.

"The worst characters," answered the inspectress, "happily, have sometimes moments of reflection—a kind of return to the correct path. On hearing these words, expressed with such resignation, La Louve, touched to the heart, as she afterward said, threw her knife on the ground, trampled it under foot, and cried, 'I was wrong to threaten you, La Goualeuse, for I am stronger than you; you were not afraid of my knife; you are courageous —I love courage; so now, if any one attempts to hurt you, I'll defend you.'" "What a singular character." "The example of La Louve increased the influence of La Goualeuse, and at present a thing almost without a precedent, hardly any of the prisoners address her familiarly: the greater part respect her, and even offer to render her any little service that can be rendered among prisoners. I asked some of them who slept in the same room with her, what was the cause of the defference shown her. 'That's more than we can tell,' they answered: 'it is plain *she is not one of us.*' 'But who told you so?' 'No one told us: we see it in a thousand things. For instance, last night, before she went to bed, she went on her knees and said her prayers; as she prays, as La Louve said, she must have *a right* to pray.' "What a strange observation!"

"These poor creatures have no sentiment of religion, yet they never utter here a sacreligious or impious word; you will see, Madame, in all our rooms, a kind of altar, where the statue of the virgin is surrounded with offerings and ornaments made by themselves. * * * * *

"But to return to La Goualeuse; her companions said to me, 'We see that *she is not as we are*, from her soft manners, her sadness, the way in which she speaks.' 'And then' said La Louve, who was present at this conversation, 'It must be that she is not one of us; for this morning, in our sleeping room, without knowing why, we were ashamed to dress ourselves before her.'" "What strange delicacy in the midst of so much degradation!" said the marchioness. * * * "They have, then, a profound sense of their degradation?"

"No one can despise them so much as they despise themselves;

among some whose repentance is sincere, this original stain of vice remains indelible in their eyes, even when they find themselves in a better situation; others become insane; so much does the sense of their former degradation remain fixed and implacable. Thus, madame, I should not be surprised if the profound sorrow of the Goualeuse proceeds from some such cause."

"If this should be so, what torture for her! a remorse which nothing can soothe!" "Happily, madame, for the honour of the human race, this remorse occurs oftener than is supposed; avenging conscience never completely sleeps, or, rather, the spirit watches while the body sleeps. Very often, when the prisoners are asleep, I make the round of the sleeping apartments. You cannot imagine, Madame, how much the physiognomies of these women differ in expression while they sleep. A great number of them whom I had seen during the day, careless, bold, brazen, impudent, seemed completely to have changed when sleep had deprived their features of all the audacity of wickedness; for vice, alas! has its pride. Oh! Madame, what sorrowful revelations on these countenances, then dejected, melancholy, and sad! what involuntary starts! what mournful sighs torn from them by a dream, doubtless impressed with an inexorable reality! I spoke to you just now of this girl called La Louve. About fifteen days ago she insulted me brutally before all the prisoners; I shrugged up my shoulders; my indifference but exasperated her; then she thought to wound me by uttering something disgraceful concerning my mother, whom she had often seen here on a visit to me. Ah, how horrid! I acknowledge, stupid as this attack was, she hurt me. La Louve saw it, and triumphed. That night I went to make an inspection in the sleeping apartment; I reached the bed of La Louve, who was to be put in the cell the next morning; I was struck with the sweetness of her face, compared with the hard and insolent expression which was habitual to her; her features seemed supplicating, full of sadness and contrition; her lips were half open, her breathing oppressed; finally, a thing which appeared to me incredible, for I thought it impossible, two tears—two large tears fell from the eyes of this woman. I looked at her in silence for some moments, when I heard her pronounce these words, '*Pardon, pardon! her mother!*' I listened more attentively, but all that I could hear was my name, Madame Armand, pronounced with a sigh." "She repented, during her

sleep, of having abused your mother?" "I thought so, and it made me less severe."

"And the next day did she express any regret for her past conduct?"

"None; she showed herself just the same as always."

* * * * *

"But, Madame, you must need great courage, much strength of mind, not to recoil before the unpleasantness of a task which brings such rare returns!" "The consciousness of fulfilling a duty sustains and encourages me; besides, sometimes, one is recompensed by some happy discovery."

"No matter; women like you, Madame, are seldom to be found."

"No, no; I assure you that which I do others do, and with more success and intelligence than me. One of the inspectresses of the other quarter of Saint Lazare, destined for those accused of other crimes, will interest you much more. She related to me the arrival, this morning, of a young girl, accused of infanticide. Never have I heard anything more touching. The father of the poor unfortunate is become insane from grief, on learning the shame of his child. It appears that nothing could be more frightful than the poverty of this family, who lived in a wretched garret in the Rue du Temple." "The Rue du Temple!" cried Madame d'Harville, astonished. "What is the name of the family?"

"Morel. Her name is Louise Morel."

"This poor family has been recommended to me," said Clemence, blushing, "but I was far from expecting to hear such terrible news—and Louise Morel—" "Says she is innocent; she swears her child was dead; and her words have the accent of truth. Since you have interested yourself in her family, Madame if you would have the kindness to see her, this mark of your goodness would calm her despair, which they say is fearful." "Certainly, I will see her, and the Goualeuse also; for all you tell me about this poor girl affects me sincerely. But what must I do to obtain her liberty? Then I will find her a place; I will take charge of her." "With the relations you have, Madame, it will be very easy for you to get her discharge to-day or to-morrow; this depends entirely on the prefect of the police. The recommendation of a person of consideration would be decisive

with him. But I have wandered far, Madame, from the observation that I made on the slumber of the Goualeuse. And on this subject, I must confess that I should not be astonished that, to the sentiments of profound grief for her first fault, is joined another sorrow, not less cruel."

"What do you mean?"

"Perhaps I am deceived; but I should not be astonished that this young girl, emancipated, as it were, from the degradation into which she was first plunged, had experienced, perhaps, a virtuous love, which was at once her happiness and her misery."

"And why do you think so?"

"The obstinate silence she keeps as to the place where she passed the three months which followed her departure from the cité, makes me think that she fears to be reclaimed by the persons with whom, perhaps, she found a refuge." "And why this fear?"

"Because she would then have to avow a past life, of which they are, doubtless, ignorant." "Really, this peasant's dress—"

"Besides, another circumstance has strengthened my suspicions. Last night, as I made my inspection, I drew near the bed of the Goualeuse; she slept profoundly; her face was calm and serene; her thick flaxen hair, half escaping from under her cap, fell in profusion on her neck and shoulders. She had her small hands clasped, and crossed on her bosom, as if she had fallen asleep while in the act of prayer. I contemplated with compassion this angelic countenance, when, in a low voice, and in a tone at once respectful, sorrowful, and endearing, she pronounced a name." "And this name?" After a moment's silence, Madame Armand said gravely, "Although I consider as sacred that which one hears another express in her sleep, you interest yourself so generously in this unfortunate, Madame, that I can confide to you this secret. This name was *Rodolphe*." "Rodolphe!" cried Madame d'Harville, thinking of the prince. Then, reflecting that, after all, the Grand-duke of Gerolstein could have no connection with the Rodolphe of the poor Goualeuse, she said to the inspectress, who seemed astonished at her exclamation, "This name surprised me, Madame, for, by a singular chance, one of my relations bear it also; but all that you have told me of the Goualeuse interests me more and more. Can I not see her to-day? Now?" "Yes, Madame, I will go, if you wish it, and find her. I can also ask

about Louise Morel, who is in the other part of the prison." "I shall be much obliged," answered Madame d'Harville, and she remained alone.

"It is singular," said she; I cannot account for the strange impression which the name of Rodolphe caused me. Truly, I am mad! between him and such a creature, what relations can exist?" "Then, after a pause, she added, "He was right; how much all this interests me! the mind, the heart, expand when they are applied to such noble occupations! Thus it seems as if one participated in the power of Providence, when relieving those who are deserving. And then, these excursions in a world, of the existence of which we have no suspicion, are so interesting, so *amusing!* What romance could give me such touching emotions, excite to this point my curiosity. This poor Goualeuse, for example, inspires me with profound pity; and this other unfortunate, the daughter of the artisan, whom the prince had so generously relieved in my name. Poor people! their frightful misery served as a pretext to save me. I have escaped shame, death, perhaps, by a hypocritical falsehood; this deceit oppresses me; but I will expiate it by force of benefactions. This will be easy; it is so sweet to follow the noble counsels of Rodolphe; it is more to love than to obey him! Oh! I feel it—I know it. I experience a sweet delight in acting through him; for I love him. Oh! yes, I love him! and he will be for ever ignorant of this eternal passion of my life."

CHAPTER VII.

LA LOUVE AND LA GOUALEUSE.

Fleur de Marie wore the blue dress and black cap of the prisoners; but even in this common costume, she was still charming. Yes since she was carried off from the farm of Bouqueval, her features were much altered; her natural paleness, slightly tinted with rose, was now as dead as the whitest of alabaster; her expression had also changed; it had now assumed a kind of dignified sadness. Fleur de Marie knew, that to endure courageously the grievous sacrifices of expiation, is almost to obtain a kind of regeneration.

"La Goualeuse, I want to speak to you," said la Louve, in a

sullen manner; and, leaving the other prisoners, she led Fleur de Marie near to the basin which was in the centre of the court. La Louve and her companion seated themselves, isolated, as it were, from the rest of their companions. * * *

The reconciliation of these two young girls, their appearance offered a singular contrast. A winter's sun shed its pale rays upon them, the blue sky was partially obscured by white, and fleecy clouds; some birds, deceived by the mildness of the atmosphere, were warbling in the black branches of the large chestnut-trees in the court; two or three sparrows, bolder than the rest, came to drink and to bathe in a little brook which flowed from the fountain; the stone margin was covered with green moss, and here and there from the interstices raised their heads some tufts of green herbs, which the frost had spared. Fleur de Marie, with her eyes fixed sadly on the clouds as they broke the azure of the sky, or reflected the golden rays of the sun, thought with a sigh, of the magnificence of nature, which she so much loved, which she admired so poetically, and of which she was again deprived.

"What do you wish to say to me?" asked Goualeuse of her companion, who, seated alongside of her, remained sombre and silent. "It is necessary that we have an explanation," cried La Louve, harshly; "this cannot last so."

"I do not understand you, La Louve." "Just now, in the court, I said to myself, I will not yield to La Goualeuse, and yet I have again given way to you." "But—" "But I tell you this cannot last so." "What have you against me, La Louve?" "I have —that I am no longer the same since your arrival; no, I have no longer any courage, strength, or hardihood."

Then, interrupting herself, she pushed up the sleeve of her dress, and shewed to La Goualeuse her strong white arm, and pointed out to her, printed with indelible ink, a poniard half plunged in a red heart; over this emblem were these words :—

"Death to Cowards!
Martial
Till death."

"Do you see that?" cried La Louve. "Yes; it makes me afraid," said La Goualeuse, turning away her head.

"When Martial, my lover, wrote this with a red-hot needle, he thought me brave; if he knew my conduct for three days past, he would plant his knife in my body as this poinard is planted in this

heart; and he would be right, for he has written there, *Death to Cowards!* and I am a *coward!*" "What have you done that is *cowardly?*" "Everything." "Do you regret what you have done just now?" "Yes!" "Ah! I do not believe you." "I tell you that I regret it, for it is another proof of the power you have over us all. Did you not hear what Mont Saint Jean said when she was on her knees to thank you?" "What did she say?" "She said, in speaking of us, that with nothing you turn us from evil to good. I could have strangled her when she said that, for to our shame, it is true. Yes, in a moment, you change us from white to black: we listen to you, we give way to our first feelings, and we are your dupes." "My dupe—because you have generously assisted this poor woman?" "It shall not be said," cried La Louve, "that a little girl like you shall trample me under foot." "I! and how?" "Do I know how? you come here—you commence at first by offending me." "Offend you?" "Yes: you ask who wants your bread; I answer the first, 'I!' Mont Saint Jean only asks for it afterward, and you give her the preference. Furious at this, I rush on you with my knife raised." "And I said to you, 'Kill me if you will, but do not make me suffer too much,'" answered La Goualeuse: "that was all."

"That was all! Yes, that was all! and yet, these words alone caused the knife to fall from my hands: made me ask your pardon—from you, who had offended me. Is it natural? Hold! when I return to my senses, I pity myself. And, the night when you arrived here, when you knelt to say your prayers, why, instead of laughing at you, and arousing the whole company—why is it that I said to myself, 'Leave her alone; she prays because she has the right to do so.' And, the next morning, why were we all ashamed to dress before you?"

"I do not know, La Louve." "Really!" said this violent creature, with irony, "you don't know. It is, doubtless, as we have told you sometimes in jest, that you are of another species from us. Perhaps you believe that?" "I never said so." "You never said so, but you act so." "I pray you to listen to me."

"No; it has been of no service to me to listen to you—to look at you. Until now I have never envied any one. Well, two or three times I have surprised myself in envying, can anything be more cowardly, in envying your face, like the Holy Virgin's—your soft and sad manner. Yes, I have envied your fair hair, and

your blue eyes. I, who have always detested the blondes, since I am a brunette—to wish to resemble you." "I? La Louve! I?" "Eight days ago I should have left my mark on any one who would have dared to tell me this. However, I do not envy you your lot; you are as sad as a Magdalen. Is it natural? speak." "How can you expect me to account for the impressions I cause?" "Oh! you know well enough what you do, with your touch-me-not air." "But what design can I have?" "Do you think I know? It is exactly because I cannot understand all this that I suspect you. There is another thing: until now I have always been gay or angry, but never a thinker; and you have made me think. Yes, there are some words you say which, in spite of me, have touched my heart and made me think all manner of sad things." "I am sorry to have made you sad, La Louve; but I do not remember to have said any—" "Eh!" cried La Louve, "what you do is often as touching as what you say. You are so malignant."

"Do not be angry, La Louve, explain yourself."

"Yesterday, in the workshop, I saw you well. You had your eyes and head down, fixed on your work; a large tear fell on your hand; you looked at it for a moment, and then you carried your hand to your lips, as if to kiss away this tear; is it not true?"

"It is true," said La Goualeuse, blushing.

"That has the appearance of nothing. But, at that moment you looked so unhappy that I felt my heart ache. Say now? do you think this amusing? How! I have always been as hard as a rock about everything concerning myself. No one can boast of ever having seen me weep; and it must be that in looking at your little face I should feel cowardice at my heart. Yes, for all that is pure cowardice; and the proof is, that for three days I have not dared to write to Martial, my conscience accuses me so much. Yes, keeping company with you has weakened my character; it must stop; I have enough of it; I wish to remain as I am, and not have them to laugh at me."

"And why should they laugh at you?" "Because they would see me acting a stupid, good-natured part—I, who made them all tremble here. No, no; I am twenty; I am as handsome as you, in my way; I am wicked; I am feared, and that's what I want. I laugh at the rest. Perish; who says the contrary?" "You are angry with me, La Louve?" "Yes, you are for me a bad ac-

quaintance; if this is continued, in fifteen days, instead of being called La Louve (the wolf), they will call me the Brebis (sheep). Thank you; it is not me they'll baptize so. Martial would kill me. In short, I want none of your company: I am going to ask to be put in another hall; if they refuse, I'll do something so that they will put me in the dungeon till my time is up. That's what I have to say to you, La Goualeuse."

"I assure you, La Louve," said Fleur de Marie, "that you feel an interest in me, not because you are cowardly, but because you are generous—brave hearts alone feel the misfortunes of others." "There is neither generosity nor courage in this," said La Louve, brutally; "it is cowardice. Besides, I do not wish you to tell me that I am touched—softened; it is not true." "I will not say so any more, La Louve; but since you have shown some interest for me, you will let me be grateful to you for it, will you not?" "To-night I shall be in another hall from you, or alone in the dungeon; and soon I shall be away from here, thank God!" "And where will you go then?" "I shall go to my own home, Rue Pierre Lescot. I have my own furnished rooms."

"And Martial!" said La Goualeuse, who hoped to continue the conversation by speaking of an object interesting to her; "and Martial! you'll be very happy to see him?" "Yes, oh, yes!" answered she: "when I was arrested he was recovering from sickness—a fever which he had, because he is always on the water. For sixteen or seventeen nights I never left him for a moment. I sold half that I possessed to pay for a physician and medicines. I can boast of it; and I do boast of it. If my man lives, he owes it to me. I yesterday burned a candle before the Virgin for him. It is foolish; but never mind, some very good effects have proceeded from this for a convalescent."

"And where is he now? what does he do?" "He lives near the bridge of Asnieres, on the shore. He is established there with his family, in a solitary house. He is always warring with the officers, and when once he is in his boat, with his double-barrelled gun, it's no use to approach him," said La Louve, proudly. "What is his trade?" "He fishes by stealth at night; his father had some *misunderstanding* with justice. He has still a mother, two sisters, and a brother. So much the better it would be for him not to have such a brother, for he is a scoundrel, who

will be guillotined one of these days; his sisters also. However, never mind, their necks belong to themselves." "And where did you first know Martial?" "In Paris. He wished to learn the trade of a locksmith; a fine trade, always red hot iron and fire around one, and danger, too! that suited him, but, like me, he had a bad head—couldn't agree with the citizen; so he returned to his family, and began to maraud on the river. He came to Paris to see me, and I went to see him at Asnieres; it is very near; but if it had been farther, I should have gone, even if I had been obliged to go on my hands and knees."

"You will be very happy to go to the country, La Louve?" said the Goualeuse, sighing; "above all, if you love, as I do, to walk in the fields." "I prefer to walk in the woods—in the large forests, with Martial." "In forests, are you not afraid?" "Afraid! Is a wolf afraid? The thicker and darker the forest, the more I like it. A lonely hut, where I should live with Martial, who should be a poacher; go with him at night, make traps for the game; and then, if the guards come to arrest us, fire on them, hiding ourselves in the bushes—ah! dame, that's what I would like." "You have, then, lived in a forest, La Louve?" "Never." "Who gave you such ideas?" "Martial." "How?" "He was a poacher in the forest of Rambouillet. About a year ago he was *looked upon* as having fired upon a guard who had fired upon him; villain of a guard! it was not proved in court, but Martial was obliged to leave. So he came to Paris to learn a trade; as I said, he left and went to maraud on the river; it is less slavish. But he always regrets the woods, and will return there some day or other."

"And your parents, La Louve, where are they?" "Do you think I know?"

"Is it a long time since you have seen them?"

"I do not know if they are dead or alive."

Fleur de Marie, although plunged very young into an atmosphere of corruption, had since respired an air so pure, that she experienced a painful oppression at the horrid story of La Louve.

CHAPTER VIII.

CASTLES IN THE AIR.

La Goualeuse, suppressing the emotion which the sad confession of her companion had caused her, said to her, timidly:—

"Listen to me without being angry." "Come, say on; I hope I have talked enough; but it is the last time we shall converse together." "Are you happy, La Louve?" "How?" "With the life you lead?" "Here?" "No; at your home, when you are free."

"Yes, I am happy."

"You would not change your lot for any other?"

"For what other? There's no other lot for me."

"Tell me, La Louve," continued Fleur de Marie, after a moment's silence, "do you not sometimes like to build castles in the air here in prison? It is so amusing."

"Respecting what—castles in the air?" "About Martial?" "Martial!" "Yes." "No, I never have." "Let me build one for you and Martial." "Bah! for what good?" "To pass the time." "Well, let us see this castle." "Just imagine, for example, that by chance you should meet some one who should say to you, 'Abandoned by your father and mother, your childhood has been surrounded by bad examples; that you must be pitied as much as blamed for having become—'" "Having become what?" "What you and I—have become," answered the Goualeuse, in a soft voice. "Suppose this person were to say to you, 'You love Martial—he loves you; leave your present mode of life, and become his wife.'" La Louve shrugged her shoulders.

"Do you think he would take me for his wife?"

"Except his poaching, has he ever committed any other culpable action?" "No; he is a poacher on the river, as he was in the woods; and he is right. Hold; are not the fish like the game, belonging to him who can take them? Where, then, is the mark of their owner?" "Well, suppose, having renounced this, he wishes to become an honest man; suppose that he inspires, by the frankness of his good resolutions, enough confidence in an unknown benefactor, so that he would give him a place as gamekeeper, for example. To him who was a poacher, it would be to his liking, I hope. It is the same trade, only lawful."

"Why, yes; it is always living in the woods."

"Only this place would be given him on the sole condition that he would marry you and take you with him."

"I go with Martial?" "Yes; you would be so happy to live together in a forest. Would you not like better, instead of a miserable poacher's hut, where you would hide yourselves like criminals, to have a nice little cottage, of which you should be the active and industrious housekeeper?"

"You make fun of me. Can this be possible?"

"Who knows? It seems to me I already see you established in your cottage in the forest with your husband, and two or three children. What happiness! is it not?" "Children! Martial!" cried La Louve; "oh, yes, they would be *proudly* loved!"

"How much company they would be for you in your solitude! Then, when they began to grow up, they could render you some assistance: the youngest could pick up the dead branches for your fire; the oldest could lead the cow to the pasture—the cow which has been given to your husband for his activity; for, having been a poacher himself, he would make all the better gamekeeper."

"Just so; that's true. Ah, it is amusing, these castles in the air. Tell me some more, La Goualeuse."

"They will be very much pleased with your husband. You will receive from his master some presents. A nice courtyard—a garden. But, marry! you'll have to work, La Louve, and that from morning to night." "Oh, if that was all, once along with Martial, work would'nt make me afraid. I have strong arms."

"And you would have enough to occupy them, I answer for it. There is so much to do. There are the meals to prepare, clothes to mend: one day the washing, another day baking, or the house to clean from top to bottom; so that the other gamekeepers would say, 'Oh, there is not a housekeeper like Martial's wife; from the cellar to the garret, her house is as nice as wax; and the children always so neat and clean. It is because she is so industrious, Madame Martial." "Tell me, La Goualeuse, is it true I shall be called Madame Martial?" "It is a great deal better than to be called La Louve, is it not?" "Certainly; I prefer the name of any man to the name of a beast. But, bah? *wolf* I was born, and *wolf* I shall die." "Who knows? do not recoil from a hard life, but an honest one, that brings happiness.

Thus, work would not alarm you." "Oh, as to that, no." "And then, besides, it is not all labour; there are moments of repose. In the winter evenings, while your children are asleep, and your husband smoking his pipe, cleaning his gun, or caressing his dogs, listen, now, you can have a nice little quiet time."

"Bah! a quite time; sit with my arms folded. Faith, no; I would prefer to mend the linen of the family, in the evening, at the corner of the fire; that is not so tiresome. The days are so short in the winter." At the words of Fleur de Marie, Louve forgot more the present for these dreams of the future. She did not conceal the wild tastes with which her lover had inspired her. Remembering the profound and salutary impression that she had received from the smiling description of a country life by Rodolphe, Fleur de Marie wished to try the same mode of action on La Louve, thinking, with reason, that if her companion would suffer herself to be sufficiently moved at this picture of a rough, poor and solitary life, to ardently desire to live such a one, this woman would deserve interest and pity.

Enchanted at seeing her companion listen with curiosity, La Goualeuse continued, smiling, "And then, do you see, *Madame Martial*—let me call you so; what do you care?" "On the contrary, that flatters me," said La Louve, shrugging her shoulders, and smiling also. "What folly—to play *Madame*! What children we are! Never mind, go on—it is amusing. You said, then—" "I say, Madame Martial, that in speaking of your mode, of living in the winter, in the woods, we only think of the worse part of the season." "Faith, no; that is not the worst. To hear the wind whistle at night in the forest, and from time to time the wolves howl, far off—I do not find this tiresome, if I am alongside of a good fire, with my man and my brats; or even all alone with my children, while he is gone to make his rounds. Oh; a gun does not frighten me. If I had my children to defend, I'd be good then. La Louve would take good care of her whelps!" "Oh; I believe you—you are very brave; but I, coward, I prefer spring to winter. Oh! the spring, Madame Martial, the spring; when the leaves burst forth; when the pretty wood-flowers blossom, which smell so good—so good, that the air is perfumed. Then it is that your children will tumble gaily on the new grass, and the forest will become so thick and bushy, that your house can hardly be seen for the foliage; I think I can see it from here.

There is a bower before the door that your husband has planted, and which shades the seat of turf where he sleeps during the heat of the day, while you go and come, and tell the children not to wake their father. I do not know if you have remarked it, but at noon, in the middle of summer, it is as silent in the woods as during the night. Not a leaf stirs, nor is a bird heard to sing."

"That is true," repeated La Louve, mechanically, who, forgetting more and more the reality, believed almost that she saw displayed before her eyes the smiling pictures described by the poetic imagination of Fleur de Marie.

"But let us speak of the house-keeping," continued Marie: "now it is night, you must milk your cows, prepare the supper undert he arbour, for you hear your husband's dogs bark, and soon the voice of their master, who, tired as he is, comes home singing. And why should he not sing, when, on a fine summer evening, with a contented mind, he regains his house, where a good wife and fine children await him? is it not so, Madame Martial?" "True, one could not do otherwise than sing," said La Louve, becoming more and more thoughtful. "At least, if one does not weep for joy." continued Fleur de Marie, herself affected. "And such tears are as sweet as songs. And then, when night has closed in, what happiness to remain under the arbour, to enjoy the serenity of a fine evening; to breathe the perfume of the forest; to hear the children prattle; to look at the stars! Then the heart is so full—so full, that it must be relieved by prayer. How; not to thank Him to whom one owes the freshness of the night, the perfume of the woods, the sweet light of the starry heavens? After these thanks, or this prayer, you go to sleep peacefully until the morning, and then again you thank the Creator; for this poor, industrious, but calm and honest life, is that of every day." "Of every day!" repeated La Louve, her head on her bosom, her eyes fixed, her breathing oppressed; "for it is true, God is good to give us the power to live happy on so little." "Well, now say," continued Fleur de Marie, gently, "say, ought he not to be blessed and thanked like a superior being, who would give you this peaceful and industrious life, instead of the miserable one you lead in the mud in the streets of Paris?"

This word Paris called La Louve to the reality.

A natural picture of an humble and rude condition, this simple recital, now lighted up by the soft glimmerings of a domestic fireside,

gilded by some joyous rays of the sun, refreshed by the gentle winds of the forest, or perfumed by the odour of wild flowers—this recital had made on La Louve an impression more profound, more striking, than the exhortations of a transcendent morality could have effected. Yes, as Fleur de Marie spoke, La Louve had desired to be an indefatigable housekeeper, an honest wife, a pious and devoted mother. To inspire, even for a moment, a violent, immoral, degraded woman, with love of a family, the respect of duty, the desire to labour, gratitude towards the Creator, and that only by promising her that which God gives to all, the sun of the heavens, and the shade of the forests that which man owes to the sweat of his brow, bread and shelter, was it not a triumph for Fleur de Marie? The moralist the most severe, the preacher the most fulminating, would they have obtained more by their menacing threats of every vengeance, human and Divine?

The angry feelings showed by La Louve when she awoke from her dream to the reality, showed the effects or influence of the words of her companion. The more her regrets were bitter on awakening to the sense of her horrible position, the more the triumph of the Goualeuse was manifest.

After a moment of silence and reflection, La Louve suddenly raised her head, passed her hand over her face, and arose from her seat threatening and angry.

"Do you see, that I had reason to avoid you, and not listen to you, because it only does me harm? Why have you talked in this way to me? to laugh at me? to torment me? And this because I was fool enough to tell you that I would like to live in a forest with Martial! But, who are you, then? Why do you turn my head in this way? You do not know what you have done, unlucky girl; Now, in spite of myself, I shall always be thinking of this wood, this house, these children, all this happiness, which I never shall have—never—never! And if I cannot forget what you have told me, my life will be a torment, a hell; and this, by your fault!"

"Oh? so much the better" said Fleur de Marie. "You say so?" cried La Louve, with threatening eyes. "Yes, so much the better; for if your miserable mode of living henceforth proves a hell, you will prefer that of which I have spoken."

"And what good is it to me to prefer it, since I cannot enjoy ·hy regret being a girl of the streets, since I must die one?"

said La Louve, more and more irritated, seizing hold of the small hand of Fleur de Marie. "Answer: Why have you made me wish for a life I cannot have?"

"To wish for an honest and industrious life is to be worthy of such a life," answered Fleur de Marie, without seeking to disengage her hand. "Well! what then, when I shall be worthy? what does that prove?"

"To see realized that which you regard as a dream," said Fleur de Marie, in a voice, so serious, so convincing, that La Louve, again overpowered, abandoned the hand of La Goualeuse, and remained struck with astonishment. "Listen to me, La Louve," added Marie, in a voice full of compassion; "do not think me so cruel as to awaken in you these thoughts, these hopes, if I were not sure, in making you ashamed of your present condition, to give you the means to escape from it?" "You! you cannot do that."

"I—no; but some one who is good, great, all-powerful."

"All-powerful?" "Listen again, La Louve. Three months since, like you I was a poor, lost, abandoned creature. One day, he, of whom I speak with tears of gratitude—" and Fleur de Marie wiped her tears: "one day he came to me; he was not afraid, all debased, all despised as I was, to speak to me words of consolation —the first I ever heard. I told him my sufferings, my misery, my shame, without concealing anything, just as you have now related to me your life, La Louve. After having listened to me with kindness, he did not blame—he pitied me; he did not deride me for my degradation—he extolled the happy and peaceful life of the country."

"Like you just now?"

"Then my situation appeared the more frightful, as the possible future which he pointed out seemed to me more enchanting."

"Like me, my God!"

"Yes; and thus like you I said, 'What good, alas! to show me this paradise—I, who am condemned to a hell upon earth?' But I was wrong to despair; for he of whom I speak is sovereignly just and good, incapable of causing a false hope to shine in the eyes of a poor creature who asked neither pity, nor hope, nor happiness from any one."

"And for you—what did he do?"

"He treated me like a sick child; I was, like you, plunged in

an air so corrupt, he sent me to respire a salubrious and vivifying atmosphere; I lived also among hideous and criminal beings; he confided me to beings made after his own image, who have purified my soul, elevated my mind; for, to all those he loves and respects he gives a spark of his celestial intelligence. Yes if my words move you, La Louve, if my tears cause your tears to flow, it is mind, his thoughts inspire me! if I speak to you of a future more happy, which you will obtain by repentance, it is that I can promise you this future in his name, although he is now ignorant of the engagement I make! In short, if I say to you, 'Hope!' it is because he always hears the voice of those who desire to become better; for God has sent him on this earth to cause a belief in Providence."

Thus speaking, the countenance of Fleur de Marie became glowing and inspired; her pale cheeks were coloured for a moment with a slight carnation; her beautiful eyes softly sparkled; she beamed forth a beauty so noble, so touching, that La Louve profoundly affected at this conversation, looked at her companion with admiration, and cried, "My God! where am I? Do I dream! I have never heard nor seen anything like this; it is not possible! but who are you, once more? oh! I said truly, that you were not one of us! But then you who speak so well you who can do so much, you who know such powerful people, how is it that you are here, a prisoner with us? But—it is, then, to tempt us? You are, then, for good—what the devil is for evil?"

Fleur de Marie was about to reply, when Madame Armand came and interrupted her to conduct her to Madame d'Harville. She said to La Louve, who remained dumb from surprise. "I see with pleasure that the presence of La Goualeuse in the prison has been beneficial to you and your companions. I know that you have made a collection for this poor Mont Saint Jean; this is good, this is charitable, La Louve. This shall be reckoned to you. I was sure that you were better than you appeared to be. In recompense for your good action, I think I can promise you that your imprisonment shall be abridged by many days." And Madame Armand departed, followed by Fleur de Marie. * *

CHAPTER IX.

THE PROTECTRESS.

THE inspectress entered, with La Goualeuse, the room where Clemence was; the pale cheeks of the young girl were slightly flushed from her earnest conversation with La Louve.

"This lady, pleased with the excellent accounts I have given you," said Madame Armand to Fleur de Marie, "desires to see you, and perhaps will deign to obtain permission for you to leave here before the expiration of your time." "I thank you, madame," answered Fleur de Marie, timidly, to Madame Armand, who left her alone with the marchioness.

Clemence, struck with the beautiful features of her protégée, and her graceful and modest bearing, could not prevent herself from remembering that the Goualeuse had, in her sleep, pronounced the name of Rodolphe, and that the inspectress believed, her to be preyed upon by a deep and concealed love. Although perfectly convinced that the Grand-duke Rodolphe could not be in question, Clemence allowed that, at least in point of beauty, La Goualeuse was worthy of the love of a prince. At the sight of her protectress, whose expression, as we have said, was that of ineffable goodness, Fleur de Marie felt herself irresistibly drawn towards her.

"My child," said Clemence, "in praising much the sweetness of your disposition, and the exemplary propriety of your conduct, Madame Armand complains of your want of confidence in her."

Fleur de Marie held down her head without replying.

"The peasant dress in which you were clothed when you were arrested, your silence on the subject of where you resided before you came here, proves that you conceal something."

"Madame—" "I have no right to ask your confidence, my poor child, I wish to ask you no improper questions; only I am assured, that if I ask your release from prison, it will be granted. Before I ask, I wish to talk with you of your projects, your resources for the future. Once free, what will you do? If as I doubt not, you are decided to follow in the good path you have entered, have confidence in me—I will put you in a way to gain your living honourably."

La Goualeuse was affected to tears at the interest Madame d'Harville evinced for her. She said, after a moment's thought,

"You deign, madame, to show yourself so benevolent, so generous, that I ought, perhaps, to break the silence which I have hitherto preserved as to the past; an oath compelled me." "An oath?" "I have sworn to conceal from justice, and from the persons employed in this prison, in what manner I have been brought here; yet, if you will, madame, make a promise—" "What promise?" "To keep my secret, I can, thanks to you, madame, without breaking my oath, relieve some respectable people, who, doubtless, are very uneasy about me." "Count on my discretion; I will only tell what you authorize me to say." "Oh! thank you, madame; I feared so much that my silence towards my benefactors would look like ingratitude." The sweet tears of Fleur de Marie, her language, almost chosen, struck Madame d'Harville with renewed astonishment. "I cannot conceal from you," said she, "that your bearing, your words, all astonish me much. How, with an education such as you appear to have had, how could you—" "Fall so low? Is it not madame?" said Marie, bitterly. "It is that, alas!" "It is but a short time since I received it. I owe it to a generous protector, who, like you, madame, without knowing me, without ever having the favourable accounts which they have given you of me, took compassion on me." "And this protector, who is he?" "I am ignorant, madame." "You are ignorant?" "He has only made himself known by his inexhaustible goodness; thanks to heaven I found myself in his way." "And where did you meet him?" "One night, in the cité," said La Goualeuse, casting down her eyes, "a man wanted to strike me; this unknown benefactor courageously defended me; such was my first encounter with him." "He was then, a man of the common order?" "The first time I saw him, he had their dress and language, but afterwards—" "Afterwards?" "The manner in which he spoke to me, the profound respect shown him by the people to whom he confided me, all proved that he had disguised himself." "But for what purpose?" "I do not know." "And the name of this mysterious protector, do you know it?" "Oh, yes, madame," said Marie, with warmth, "Thank God! for I can bless and adore this name without ceasing. My deliverer is called Rodolphe, madame."

Clemence blushed deeply; "And has he no other name?" asked she, quickly. "I do not know, madame. At the farm where he sent me, he was known only by the name of Rodolphe." "And

his age?" "He is still young madame." "And handsome?" "Oh, yes; handsome, noble—as his heart." The grateful, feeling manner with which Fleur de Marie pronounced these words, caused a disagreeable sensation in Madame d'Harville. An invincible, an inexplicable presentiment told her that Rodolphe was the prince. "The observations of the inspectress were well founded," thought Clemence. "The Goualeuse loved Rodolphe; it was his name she had pronounced in her sleep? Under what strange circumstances had the prince and this poor girl met? Why did Rodolphe go disguised into the cité?" The marchioness could not solve these questions; only she remembered that Sarah had formerly, wickedly and falsely related to her some pretended eccentricities of Rodolphe, and of his strange "amours." Was it not, in effect, strange that he had taken from a life of misery this creature, of ravishing beauty, and of no common mind? Clemence had noble qualities, but she was a woman, and she loved Rodolphe profoundly, although she had determined to bury this secret in the very depths of her heart. Without reflecting that this, no doubt, was one of those generous actions which the prince was accustomed to do secretly; without reflecting that, perhaps, she confounded with love, a sentiment of warm gratitude; this sentiment, even if it were more tender, Rodolphe might be ignorant of; she, in the first feeling of bitterness and injustice, could not prevent herself considering Marie a rival. Her pride revolted in feeling that she blushed, and suffered in spite of herself, at a rivalry so abject. She resumed then, in a cold manner, which cruelly contrasted with the affectionate benevolence of her first words: "And how is it, mademoiselle, your protector leaves you in prison? How did you get here?" "My God! madame," said Fleur de Marie, timidly, struck with this change of language; "have I displeased you in any way?" "And in what could you have displeased me?" demanded Madame d'Harville, with hauteur. "It is, that it seems to me that just now you spoke to me with more kindness, madame." "Truly, mademoiselle, must I weigh each of my words, since I consent to interest myself in you? I have the right, I think, to address to you certain questions." Hardly were these words pronounced, than Clemence, for many reasons, regretted their severity. In the first place, by a praiseworthy return of generosity; then, because she thought by offending her rival, she could learn nothing more of what she wished to know.

In fact, the countenance of Marie, one moment open and confiding, became instantly timid.

Like the sensitive plant, which at the first touch closes its delicate leaves, and folds them within its bosom, the heart of Fleur de Marie contracted painfully. Clemence resumed gently, not to awaken the suspicions of her protégée by too sudden a change. "In truth, I repeat to you, I cannot comprehend that, having so much to praise in your benefactor, you should be a prisoner here; how, after having sincerely returned to the paths of rectitude, could you cause yourself to be arrested in a place to you interdicted? All this seems to me extraordinary. You speak of an oath which so far as imposed silence upon you; but this oath even, is so strange." "I have told the truth, madame. "I am sure of it: one has only to see and hear you, to believe you incapable of a falsehood; but, what is incomprehensible in your situation, augments and irritates my impatient curiosity; it is only to that you must attribute the vivacity of my words just now. Come, I avow it. I was wrong, for although I had no other right to your confidence than my earnest wish to be of service to you, you have offered to tell me that which you have told to no one, and I am very sensible, believe me, my poor child, of this proof of your faith in the interest I have for you. Hence, I promise you, in guarding scrupulously your secret, if you confided it to me, I will do all in my power to meet your wishes. Thanks to this palliating speech, Madame d'Harville regained the confidence of La Goualeuse, for a moment impaired. Fleur de Marie, in her innocence, reproached herself for having misinterpreted the words which had wounded her.

"Pardon me, madame," said she: "I was doubtless wrong not to tell you at once what you wished to know; but you asked me the name of my preserver: in spite of myself, I cannot resist the pleasure of speaking of him." "Nothing is better; it proves how grateful you are towards him. But why have you left the good people with whom he placed you? Does your oath have reference to this?" "Yes, madame; but, thanks to you, I believe now, still keeping my word, I shall be able to satisfy my benefactors as to my disappearance." "Come, my poor child, I listen." "It is about three months since Mr. Rodolphe placed me at a farm situated four or five leagues hence." "He conducted you there himself?" "Yes, madame; he confided me to the care of

a lady, as good as she was venerable, whom I soon loved as a mother. She and the abbé of the village, at the request of Mr. Rodolphe, took charge of my education." "And Monsieur Rodolphe, did he often come to the farm?" "No, madame: he came there only three times while I was there." Clemence could not conceal a thrill of joy.

"And when he came to see you, it made you very happy, did it not?" "Oh, yes, madame, it was for me more than happiness: It was a sentiment mixed with gratitude, respect, admiration, and even a little fear." "Fear?" "From him to me—from him to others—the distance is so great." "But what is his rank?" "I am ignorant if he has any rank, madame." "Yet you speak of the distance which exists between him and others." "Oh, madame, that which places him above the rest of the world, is the elevation of his character—his inexhaustible generosity to those who suffer; it is the enthusiasm with which he inspires everybody. The wicked even cannot hear his name without trembling; they respect him as much as they fear him. But pardon me, madame, for having again spoken of him—I should give you but an imperfect idea of him whom I ought to content myself with adoring in silence. As well attempt to express by words the grandeur of God! This comparison is, perhaps, sacrilegious. But will it offend God to compare to him the man who has given me a consciousness of good and evil—who has dragged me from the abyss—to whom I owe a new existence?"

"I do not blame you, my child; I comprehend your feelings. But how have you abandoned this farm, where you were so happy?" "Alas it was not voluntary, madame."

"Who forced you, then?" "One night a short time since," said Fleur de Marie, trembling at the recital, "I went to the parsonage of the village, when a wicked woman, who had treated me cruelly in my childhood, and a man her accomplice, who was concealed with her in a ravine, threw themselves upon me, wrapped me up, and carried me off in a carriage." "And for what purpose?" "I do not know, madame. My waylayers were acting I think, under the orders of some powerful persons." "What then ensued?" "Hardly had the vehicle moved, than the bad woman, whose name was La Chouette, cried, 'I have got some vitriol; I am going to wash the face of La Goualeuse, to disfigure her.'" "How horrid! unfortunate child and what saved you from this danger?"

"The accomplice of this woman, a blind man." "He defended you?" "Yes, madame, on this occasion and on another. This time a struggle ensued between him and La Chouette. Availing himself of his strength, he forced her to throw out of the window the bottle which contained the vitriol. This was the first service he rendered me, after having assisted in carrying me off. The night was very dark. At the end of an hour and a half the carriage stopped, I believe on the high road which crosses the plain to St. Denis; a man on horseback waited for us here: 'Well!" said he, 'have you got her at last?' 'Yes, we have her,' answered La Chouette, who was furious at having been prevented from disfiguring me. 'If you wish to get rid of this little thing, there is a good way: I will stretch her on the road, drive the wheels of the carriage over her head—she will look as if she was run over by accident!" "Oh! this is frightful!" "Alas! madame, La Chouette was well capable of doing what she said. Happily, the man on horseback said that he did not wish to harm me; that it was only necessary to keep me shut up for two months in some place where I could neither get out, nor write to any one. Then La Chouette proposed to take me to a man called Bras-Rouge, who kept a tavern in the Champs Elysées. In this house there were several subterranean chambers; one of them, La Chouette said, could answer for my prison: the man on horseback accepted this proposition: then he promised me that, after remaining two months with Bras-Rouge, I shall be so provided for, that I would not regret the farm of Bouqueval.

"What strange mystery! "This man gave some money to La Chouette, promised her more when I should be taken from Bras-Rouge, and set out on a gallop. We continued our route towards Paris. A short time before we arrived at the gates, the blind man said to La Chouette, 'You wish to shut up La Goualeuse in one of the cellars of Bras-Rouge: you know very well that, being near the river, these cellars in winter are always inundated. Do you wish, then, to drown her?' 'Yes,' answered La Chouette." "But, my God! what have you done to this horrible woman?" "Nothing, madame: and yet, since my infancy, she has always shown this feeling towards me. The Brigand answered, 'I will not have the Goualeuse drowned; she shall not go to Bras-Rouge.' La Chouette was as much surprised as I was, madame, to hear this man defend me thus. She became furious, and swore that

she would take me to Bras-Rouge in spite of him. 'I defy you,' said he, 'for I have La Goualeuse by the arm; I will not let her go, and I'll strangle you if you come near her.' 'But what do you mean to do with her, then?' cried La Chouette, 'since she must be put out of the way for two months.' 'There is a way', said the Brigand; 'we are going to the Champs Elysées; you will go and look for Bras-Rouge at his tavern—it is midnight: you will find him there; you will bring him with you; he will take La Goualeuse to the station, and declare she is a street-walker, whom he found near his tavern. As these girls are condemned to three months imprisonment, when they are caught in the Champs Elysées, and the Goualeuse is still on the lists of the police, she will be arrested, and sent to Saint Lazare, where she will be as well guarded and concealed as in the cellar of Bras-Rouge.' 'But, replied La Chouette, 'she will not suffer herself to be arrested; once at the guard-house, she will tell all; she will denounce us. Supposing, even that she is imprisoned, she will write to her protectors; all will be discovered.' 'No, she will go to prison willingly,' answered the Brigand; 'she will swear that she will not denounce us to any one as long as she remains at Saint Lazare, nor afterwards either; she owes this to me, for I have prevented her being disfigured by you, and drowned at Bras-Rouge's; but if, after having sworn not to speak, she should do it, we will put the farm at Bouqueval to fire and blood!' Then, addressing me, he said, 'Decide; swear the oath I ask; you shall go to prison for two months; otherwise I abandon you to La Chouette, who will take you to the cellar of Bras-Rouge, where you will be drowned. Come, decide. I know, if you swear, you will keep your oath.'" "And you have sworn?"

"Alas! yes, madame; I feared so much to be disfigured by La Chouette, or to be drowned in a cellar; this appeared to me so frightful. Any other kind of death would have appeared less fearful. I should not, perhaps, have endeavoured to escape."

"What a gloomy idea at your age!" said Madame d'Harville, looking at Marie with surprise. "Once away from this place, returned to your benefactors, will you not be very happy? Has not your repentance effaced the past?" "Can the past be effaced? Can the past be forgotten? Can repentance destroy the memory?" cried Fleur de Marie, in a tone so despairing, that Clemence shuddered. But all faults can be redeemed, unhappy child!"

"And the recollection of the stain—madame, does it not become more and more terrible in measure as the mind is purified, as the soul becomes elevated? Alas! the more you mount, the deeper appears the abyss from which you have emerged." "Then you renounce all hope of re-establishment, of pardon?" "On the part of others—no, madame; your goodness proves that indulgence is never wanting to the penitent." "You will then be the only one without pity towards yourself." "Others may be ignorant, may pardon and forget what I have been. I, madame, never can forget." "And sometimes you wish to die!" "Sometimes!" said Marie, smiling bitterly; "yes, madame, sometimes." "Yet you feared to be disfigured by that horrible woman? you hold to your beauty, then, poor child? That announces that life has still some charms for you. Courage, then—courage!"

"It is perhaps, a weakness to think so; but if I were handsome, as you say, I should wish to die handsome, in pronouncing the name of my benefactor."

The eyes of Madame d'Harville filled with tears.

Fleur de Marie had said these words so simply; her angelic features, pale and cast down, her mournful smile, were so much in unison with her words, that no one could doubt the reality of her gloomy desire. Madame d'Harville was endowed with too much sensibility not to feel what was fatal and inflexible in this thought of La Goualeuse—"*I shall never forget what I have been*" —a fixed, constant idea, which would predominate, torture the life of Fleur de Marie. Clemence, ashamed of having for a moment misunderstood the generosity, always so disinterested, of the prince, also regretted that she should have had for a moment a feeling of jealousy towards Marie, who had expressed with so much warmth, her gratitude towards her protector. Strange thing—the admiration which this poor prisoner showed so vividly for Rodolphe, augmented, perhaps, still more the profound love which Clemence was for ever to conceal from him. She resumed, to drive away her thoughts: "I hope that, in future, you will be less severe towards yourself. But let us speak of your oath; now I can understand your silence. You did not wish to denounce these wretches?" "Although the Brigand took part in my abduction, he had twice defended me—I was afraid of being ungrateful towards him." "And you lent yourself to the designs of these

monsters?" "Yes, madame, I was so much alarmed. La Chouette went to seek Bras-Rouge; he took me to the guard-house, saying he found me roving about his inn; I did not deny it; I was arrested, and brought here." "But your friends at the farm must be very much alarmed?" "Alas! madame, in my fright, I did not reflect that my oath would prevent me informing them; now it gives me much pain, but I believe, is it not so? that without breaking my oath, I can beg you to write to Madame Georges, at the farm of Bouqueval, to have no uneasiness about me, without telling her where I am, for I have promised to be silent."

"My child, these precautions will become useless if, at my recommendation, you are pardoned; to-morrow you shall return to the farm, without having broken your oath; you can then consult your benefactors, to know how far you are restricted by this oath, drawn from you by threats."

"You think, madame, that, thanks to your kindness, I can hope to leave here soon?" "You deserve so much interest, that I shall succeed, I am sure, and I doubt not that after to-morrow you can go yourself to re-assure your benefactors."

"My God! madame, how can I have merited so much kindness on your part? how can I show my gratitude?"

"By continuing to conduct yourself as you have done. I only regret that I can do nothing for your future welfare—it is a pleasure that your friends have reserved." Madame Armand entered suddenly, with an alarmed air. "Madame," said she to Clemence with hesitation, "I am grieved at the message I have to deliver to you." "What do you mean to say, madame?" "The Duke de Lucenay is below—he comes from your house, madame." "My God! you frighten me: what is it?" "I am ignorant, madame; but the duke has information for you, he says, as sad as it was unforeseen. He learned from the duchess, his wife, that you were here, and he came in all haste."

"Sad news!" said Madame d'Harville. Then suddenly she cried, in a heart-rending tone, "My daughter—my child, perhaps! oh! speak, madame!" "I am ignorant, madame." "Oh! in mercy, madame, take me to the duke," cried Madame d'Harville, going out, quite bewildered, and followed by Madame Armand. "Poor mother!" said Marie, sadly, "Oh! no, it is impossible; at the moment even when she was showing so much

benevolence towards me, such a blow to fall! No, no—once more, it is impossible!" * * * * * *

CHAPTER X.

A FORCED INTIMACY.

We will now conduct the reader to the house in the Rue du Temple, the day of the suicide of Mr. d'Harville. Pipelet alone in the lodge, conscientious and indefatigable workman, was occupied in mending the boot which had more than once fallen from his hands, during the last and audacious insult of Cabrion. The physiognomy of the chaste porter was dejected, and much more melancholy than usual.

Pipelet endeavoured to find some reasonable possible motive for the outrageous conduct of Cabrion, and on this subject he posed himself with a thousand not to be solved questions. How many times, in the overflowings of his imagination, had he been forced to commune within himself, thanks to the phrensied scepticism of his wife, who only looking at facts, and disdaining to seek after causes, grossly considered the incomprehensible conduct of Cabrion towards Alfred as a simple farce.

Pipelet, a serious and grave man, could not admit of such an interpretation; he groaned at the blindness of his wife; his dignity as a man revolted at the thought that he could be the plaything of a combination so vulgar: *a farce!* He was absolutely convinced that the unheard-of conduct of Cabrion concealed some mysterious plot under a frivolous appearance.

"I would sooner lay my head upon the scaffold than to admit that, in the unique intention of a stupid pleasantry, Cabrion could be so obstinately exasperated against me; *a farce* is only played for the gallery. Now, in his last undertaking, this obnoxious creature had no witness; he acted alone and in obscurity; he has clandestinely introduced himself into the solitude of my lodge. I will ask any disinterested person, for what purpose? It was not from bravado—no one saw him; it was not from pleasure—the laws of nature oppose it; it was not from friendship—I have but one enemy in the world—it is he. It must, then, be acknowledged that there is a mystery there which my reason cannot penetrate! Then what does this diabolical plot

tend to? a plot concerted with a long hand and pursued with a persistance which alarms me. This is what I cannot comprehend: it is this impossibility to raise the veil, which, by degrees, is undermining and consumes me."

Such were the painful reflections of Pipelet at the moment when we present him to our reader. The honest porter had just torn open his bleeding wounds, by carrying his hand mechanically to the fracture of his hat, when a piercing voice, coming from one of the upper stories of the house, made these words resound again: "Pipelet, quick, quick! come up; make haste!" "I do not know this organ," said Alfred, after a moment of anxious listening, and he let his arm, enclosed in the boot he was mending, fall on his knees. "Pipelet, make haste, then!" repeated the voice in a pressing tone. "This organ is completely strange to me. It is masculine: it calls me, I can affirm. It is not a sufficient reason that I should abandon my lodge. Leave it alone —desert it in the absence of my wife—never!" "Pipelet," said the voice, "come up quick! your wife is sick!"

"Anastasia!" cried Alfred, rising from his seat; then he fell back again, saying to himself, "Child that I am; it is impossible; my wife went out an hour ago; yes, but might she not have returned without my seeing her? This would be rather irregular; but I must declare it is possible."

"Pipelet, come up, then; I have your wife in my arms." "Some one has my wife in his arms!" said Pipelet, rising abruptly. "I cannot unlace Madame Pipelet all alone," added the voice. These words produced a magical effect upon Alfred; his frame became flush; his chastity revolted. "The masculine and unknown organ speaks of unlacing Anastasia," cried he; "I oppose it; I forbid it." And he rushed out of the lodge, but on the threshold he stopped. Pipelet found himself in one of those horribly critical, and eminently dramatic positions, so often described by poets. On the one hand, duty retained him in his lodge: on the other, his chaste and conjugal susceptibility called him to the upper stories of the house. In the midst of these terrible perplexities, the voice said, "You don't come, Pipelet? so much the worse; I cut the strings, and I shut my eyes." This threat decided Pipelet.

"Sir," cried he, in a stentorian voice, "in the name of honour, I conjure you, cut nothing; leave my wife intact; I come;" and

Alfred rushed up stairs, leaving, in his alarm, the door of the lodge open. Hardly had he left it, when a man entered quickly, took from the table a hammer, jumped on the bed, at the back part of the obscure alcove of Pipelet, and vanished. This operation was done so quickly, that the porter, remembering, almost immediately, that he had left the door open, returned precipitately, shut it, and carried off the key, without suspecting that any one could have entered in this interval. After this measure of precaution, Alfred started again to the assistance of Anastasia, crying, with all his strength, "Sir, cut nothing; I am coming—here I am—I place my wife under the safeguard of your delicacy."

Hardly had he mounted the first flight, before he heard the voice of Anastasia, not from the upper story, but in the alley. This voice, shriller than ever, cried, "Alfred, here you leave the lodge alone. Where are you, then, old gad-about?" At this moment, Pipelet was about placing his right foot on the landing-place of the first story; he remained petrified, his head turned towards the bottom of the stairs, his mouth open, his eyes fixed, his foot raised. "Alfred," cried his wife. "Anastasia is below; she is not above; she is not sick," said Pipelet to himself. "But, then, this unknown and masculine organ, who threatened me to unlace her, who is it? Is it an impostor? He, then, has been playing a cruel game with my inquietude. What is his design? There is something extraordinary going on here. No matter: *do your duty, happen what may.* After having responded to my wife, I shall mount to enlighten this mystery, and verify this organ."

Pipelet descended, very much troubled, and found himself face to face with his wife. "It is you!" said he. "Well; yes, it is me; whom would you have it to be?" "It is you. My eyes do not deceive me." "Ah, now; what is the matter now, that makes your big eyes look like loto balls? You look at me as if you were going to eat me." "It is that your presence reveals to me that something has been passing here, things—" "What things? Come, give me the key of the lodge; why do you leave it alone? I come from the office of the diligence from Normandy, where I went in a hack, to carry the trunk of Mr. Bradamanté, who did not wish it to be known that he was about to leave to-night, and who could not depend on that little scoundrel,

Tortillard; and he is right." On saying these words, she took the key which her husband held in his hand, opened the lodge, and went in before him.

Hardly had they entered, when a person, descending the staircase lightly, passed rapidly and unperceived before the lodge. It was the masculine organ which had so vividly excited the inquietudes of Alfred.

Pipelet rested himself heavily on his chair, and said to his wife, in a trembling voice, "Anastasia, I do not feel at my accustomed ease; things occurring here, events—" "Now you repeat this again; but things occur everywhere; what is the matter? Come, let us see; ah, but you are all wet—all in a sweat. What effort have you been making? He's all a trickling, the old darling."

"Yes, I trickle, and I have reason, too;" and Pipelet passed his hand over his face dripping with perspiration; "for there are passing, here, things to overturn." "Again, I ask, what is it? You never can remain quiet. You must always be trotting about like a lean cat, instead of remaining in your chair, to take care of the lodge." "Anastasia, you are unjust in saying that I trot like a lean cat. If I trot, it is for you." "For me?" "Yes; to spare you an outrage of which we both should have groaned and blushed, I have deserted a post which I consider as sacred as the sentry-box of a soldier." "Some one wished to commit an outrage on me—on me?"

"It was not on you, since the outrage of which you were threatened was to have been accomplished upstairs, and that you were gone out; but—" "May the devil run away with me if I understand a single word of what you are singing there. Ah, is it that you are decidedly losing your noddle? Look here; do you see? I shall begin to think that you are absent in mind—hammer-struck; and this is the fault of this beggarly Cabrion, whom the devil confound. Since his farce of the other day, I don't know you; you look struck all of a heap. That being will be, then, always your nightmare." Hardly had Anastasia pronounced the words, than a strange thing came to pass. Alfred remained sitting, his face turned towards the bed. The lodge was lighted by the sickly light of a winter's day, and by a lamp. At the moment when his wife pronounced the name of Cabrion, Pipelet thought he saw, in the shade of the alcove, the

immovable and cunning face of the painter. It was he; his pointed hat, his long hair, his thin face, his satanic smile, his beard, and his paralysing gaze. For a moment, Pipelet thought himself in a dream; he passed his hand over his eyes, believing that he was the victim of an illusion. It was not an illusion. Nothing could be more real than this apparition. Frightful thing, nobody could be seen, but only a head, of which the living flesh stood out in bold relief from the obscurity of the alcove. At this sight, Pipelet fell over backward, without saying a word; he raised his right arm towards the bed, and pointed at this terrible vision, with a gesture so alarming, that his wife turned to seek the cause of an alarm of which she soon partook, in spite of her habitual courage. She recoiled two steps, seized with force the hand of Alfred, and cried "Cabrion!"

"Yes," murmured Pipelet, in a hollow voice, almost extinct, shutting his eyes. The stupor of the pair paid the greatest honour to the talent of the artist who had so admirably painted on the pasteboard the features of Cabrion. Her first surprise over, Anastasia, as bold as a lion, ran to the bed, got on it, and tore the picture from the wall.

Alfred, with his eyes closed, his hands stretched forth, remained immovable, as he had always been accustomed to do in the critical moments of his life. The convulsive oscillations of his chapeau alone revealed, from time to time, the continued violence of his interior emotions. "Open your eyes, old darling," said his wife, triumphantly; "it 's nothing; it 's a picture; the portrait of this scoundrel of a Cabrion. Look; see how I stamp upon him." And Anastasia, in her indignation, threw the picture on the ground, and trampled it under her feet, crying, "That's the way I would like to treat his flesh and bones, the wretch." Then, picking it up, "See," said she, "now it has my marks; look, now." Alfred shook his head, negatively, without saying a word, and making a sign to his wife to take away the detested picture. "Has ever any one seen such impudence? This is not all; he has written at the bottom, in red letters, '*Cabrion, to his good friend Pipelet; for life,*'" said the porteress, examining the picture by the light. "*His good friend for life!*" murmured Alfred; and he raised his hands towards heaven, as if to call it to witness this new and outrageous irony. "But how could he do it?" said Anastasia. "This portrait was

not there this morning, when I made the bed; very sure. You took the key with you, just now. Nobody could have entered while you were absent. How then, once more, could this portrait get there? Ah, now, could it be—could it be you, by chance, who put it there, old darling?" At this monstrous hypothesis, Alfred bounced from his seat; he opened his eyes, wide and threatening. "I—I fasten in my alcove the portrait of this evil-doer, who, not content with persecuting me by his odious presence, pursues me at night in my dreams; the daytime in a picture. But will you make me mad, then, Anastasia—mad enough to be chained?" "Well; what then? When, for the sake of making peace, you should have agreed with Cabrion during my absence. Where would have been the great harm?"

"I make up with—oh, my God! you hear her." "And then, he would have given you his portrait, as a pledge of friendship. If this is so, do not deny it." "Anastasia, if this is so, it must be confessed you are as capricious as a pretty woman." "My wife!" "But, in short, it must have been you who placed the portrait." "I? oh, my God!" "But who is it, then? You, madame." "I?" "Yes," cried Pipelet, wildly, "it is you; I have reason to believe it is you. This morning, having my back turned towards the bed, I could see nothing." "But, old darling, I tell you it must be you, otherwise I shall think it was the devil—since I have not left the lodge, and that when I went up stairs to answer to the call of the *masculine organ*, I had the key; the door was shut—you opened it: deny that!" "Faith, it is true!" "You confess, then?" "I confess that I comprehend nothing. It's a farce, and it is prettily played—must be just." "A farce!" cried Pipelet, carried away by a phrenzied indignation. "Ah! there you are again—a farce! I tell you, that all this conceals some abominable plot: there is something under all this. The abyss is hidden under flowers—they try to stun me to prevent my seeing the precipice from which they wish to plunge me. It only remains for me to place myself under the protection of the laws. Happily, God protects France;" and Pipelet turned towards the door. "Where are you going to, old darling?" "To the commissary's to lodge my complaint, and this portrait as proof of the persecutions I am overwhelmed with." "But what will you complain of?" "What will I complain of? How! my most inveterate enemy shall find means, by proceedings—fraudu-

lent—to force me to have his portrait in my house, even on my nuptial bed! and the magistrates will not take me under their protection? Give me this portrait, Anastasia—give it to me—not the side where the painting is, that sight revolts me! The traitor cannot deny it; it is in his hand: *Cabrion to his good friend Pipelet for life.* For life? yes, it is that—it is for my life, without doubt, that he pursues me, and he will finish by having it. I live in continual alarm: I shall think that this infernal being is there, always there—under the floor, in the walls, in the ceiling; at night, that he sees me reposing in the arms of my wife; in the daytime, that he is standing beside me, always with his satanic smile; and who will tell me that even at this moment he is not here, concealed somewhere, like a venomous insect? Come, now! are you there, monster? are you there?" cried Pipelet, accompanying this furious imprecation with a circular movement of the head, as if he had wished to interrogate all parts of the lodge.

"I am here, good friend!" said, most affectionately, the well-known voice of Cabrion. These words seemed to come from the effects of ventriloquism; for the infernal rogue was standing outside the door of the lodge, enjoying the smallest details of this scene; however, after having pronounced these last words, he prudently made off, not without leaving, as we shall see, a new subject of rage, astonishment, and meditation to his victim. Madame Pipelet, always courageous and sceptical, looked under the bed, and in every hole and corner, without success, while Pipelet, undone by the last blow, had fallen on his chair, in a state of utter despair. "It's nothing, Alfred," said Anastasia; "the scoundrel was concealed behind the door, and while I looked one way, he escaped the other. Patience, I'll catch him one of these days, and then, let him look out; he shall eat the handle of my broom!" The door opened, and Madame Seraphin, housekeeper of Jacques Ferrand, entered.

"Good day, Madame Seraphin," said the porteress, who, wishing to conceal from a stranger her domestic sorrows, assumed a very gracious and smiling air: "what can I do to serve you?" "First, tell me, then, what is your new sign?" "New sign?" "The little sign." "A little sign?" "Yes, black with red letters, which is nailed over the door of your alley." "How! in the street?" "Why, yes, in the street, just over your door.'

"My dear Madame Seraphin, may I never speak again, if I understand a word; and you, old darling?"

Alfred remained dumb. "In truth, it concerns Pipelet," said Madame Seraphin; "he must explain this to me." Alfred uttered a sort of low, inarticulate groan, shaking his broad brimmed hat. This pantomime signified that Alfred found himself incapable of explaining anything to others, being sufficiently preoccupied with an infinity of problems, each one more difficult of solution than the other. "Pay no attention, Madame Seraphin," said Anastasia: "this poor Alfred has got the cramp in his bowels, that makes him—" "But what is this sign, then, of which you speak?" "Perhaps our neighbour—" "But no, no; I tell you it is a little sign nailed over your door." "Come, you want to joke." "Not at all, I saw it as I came in; there is written on it, in large letters, '*Pipelet and Cabrion.*'" "Ah, my God! there is written over our door, do you hear, Alfred?"

Pipelet looked at Madame Seraphin with a wild stare; he did not comprehend; he did not wish to comprehend.

"There it is—in the street—on a sign!" repeated Madame Pipelet, confounded at this new audacity. "Yes, for I have just read it. Then I said to myself, 'What a funny thing! Pipelet is a cobbler by trade, and he informs the passers-by that he is engaged in partnership with Cabrion. What does it signify? There is something concealed, it is clear; but, as the sign says, inquire of the porter, Madame Pipelet will explain it.'" "But look there," cried Madame Seraphin suddenly, "your husband looks as if he was sick: take care, he will fall backwards." Madame Pipelet received Alfred in her arms, in a fainting state. This last blow had been too violent; he nearly lost all consciousness as he pronounced these words: "The creature has publicly posted me!" "I told you, Madame Seraphin, Alfred has the cramp in his bowels, without speaking of an unchained blackguard, who undermines him with his sorry tricks. The poor old darling cannot resist it! Happily, I have a drop of absinthe here; probably it will put him on his legs."

In effect, thanks to the infallible remedy of Madame Pipelet, Alfred by degrees recovered his senses; but, alas! hardly had he come to, than he had to undergo another trial.

A middle-aged person, neatly dressed, and very pleasing face, opened the door, and said, "I have just seen on a sign placed

over this alley, Pipelet and Cabrion are in partnership. Can you, if you please, do me the honour to inform me what this means—you, who are the porter of this house?" "What this means!" cried Pipelet, in a thundering voice, giving vent to his indignation, too long suppressed; "This means that Cabrion is an infamous impostor, sir!"

The man, at this sudden and furious explosion, drew back a step. Alfred, much exasperated, with a fiery look and purple face, had stretched his body half out of the lodge, and leaned his two contracted hands on the lower part of the door, while the figures of Madame Seraphin and Anastasia could be vaguely seen in the back ground, in the semi-obscure light of the lodge. "Learn, sir," cried Pipelet, "that I have no commerce with this scoundrel, Cabrion, and of friendship still less than any other."

"It is true; and you must be very queer, old cornichon as you are, to come and ask such a question," cried Madame Pipelet, sharply, showing her quarrelsome face over the shoulder of her husband.

"Madame!" said the man, sententiously, falling back another step, "notices are made to be read; you put them up, I read; I have the right to do so, but you have no right to say such rude things."

"Rude things yourself, you beggarly wretch!" replied Anastasia, showing her teeth. "You are a low-bred person."

"Alfred, your boot measure, that I can take the length of his muzzle, to teach him to come and play the farce at his age, old clown." "Insults, when one comes to ask the meaning of a notice placed over your own door? It shall not pass over in this way, Madame." "But, sir," cried the unhappy porter. "But, sir," answered the quiz, pretending to be angry, "be as friendly as you please with your Cabrion, but, by the powers! don't stick it in large letters under the noses of the passers-by! I find myself under the necessity of telling you that you are a pitiful wretch, and that I shall go and make my complaint to the commissary," and the quiz departed in a great rage.

"Anastasia!" said Pipelet, in a sorrowful tone, "I shall not survive this, I feel it; I am wounded to death. I have no hope of escaping him. You see, my name is publicly stuck up alongside of this wretch. He dares to say that I have a friendly trade with him, and the public will believe it. I inform you—I say it

—I communicate it; it is monstrous, it is an infernal idea: but it must finish; the measure is full; either he or I must fall in the struggle!" and, overcoming his habitual apathy, Pipelet determined on a vigorous resolution, seized the portrait of Cabrion, and rushed towards the door. "Where are you going to, Alfred?" "To the commissary's. At the same time I am going to tear down this infamous sign; then, with this portrait and this sign in my hand, I will cry to the commissary, 'Defend me, avenge me, deliver me from Cabrion!'" "Well said, old darling; stir yourself, shake yourself; if you cannot get the sign down, tell your neighbour to help you, and to lend you his little ladder." "Rascally Cabrion! Oh! if I had him, and could do it, I'd fry him on my stove. I should like so much to see him suffer. Yes, there are people who are guillotined, who do not deserve it as much as he does. The wretch! I should like to see him on the place du Greve, the villain! Alfred showed, under these circumstances, the most sublime equanimity. Notwithstanding his great causes of revenge against Cabrion, he had the generosity to feel sentiments akin to pity for him. "No," said he, "no; even if I could I would not ask for his head! As for me—yes, yes—so much the worse. And—" "Go then!" cried the ferocious Anastasia. "No," replied Alfred, "I do not like blood; but I have the right to claim the perpetual seclusion of this evil-doer; my repose requires it; my health commands it; the law accords me this reparation: otherwise, I leave France—my dear France! That is what they'll gain." And Alfred, swallowed up in his grief, walked majestically out of the lodge, like one of those imposing victims of ancient fatality.

CHAPTER XI.

CECILY.

Anastasia, without suspecting the least in the world the virtue and devotion of the notary, blamed extremely the severity he had shown towards Louise Morel and Germain. Naturally, the porteress included Madame Seraphin in her reprobation; but like a skilful politician, she concealed her feeling for the housekeeper under a most cordial reception. After having formerly disapproved of the unworthy conduct of Cabrion, Madame Seraphin

added, "Ah! now; what has become of Mr. Bradamanté (Polidori)? Last night I wrote to him—no answer; this morning I came to find him—no one. I hope at this time I shall be more fortunate." Madame Pipelet feigned to be very much vexed. "Ah! for example," cried she, "you must have bad luck." "How?" "Mr. Bradamanté has not come in." "It is insupportable." "Heiu! it is vexing, my poor Madame Seraphin?" "I, who have so much to say to him." "If it is not just like fate." "So much the more, as I have to invent so many pretexts for coming here; for if Mr. Ferrand ever suspected that I knew a quack, he who is so devout, so scrupulous, you can judge what a scene?" "Just like Alfred. He is so prudish, that he is startled at everything." "And you do not know when Bradamanté will come in?" "He made an appointment for six or seven o'clock in the evening, for he told me to beg the person to call again if he had not returned. Come back this evening, you will be sure to find him." And Anastasia added, mentally, "You can count on this: in one hour he will be on the road to Normandy." "I will return, then, to-night, "said Madame Seraphin, much annoyed; "but I have something else to say to you, my dear Madame Pipelet. You know what has happened to this wench of a Louise, whom every one thought so virtuous?" "Don't speak of it," answered Madame Pipelet, raising her eyes with compunction: "it makes my hair stand on end." "I want to tell you that we have no servant; and that, if by chance, you should hear of a young girl, virtuous, good worker, honest, you will be very kind if you will address her to me. Good subjects are so difficult to find, that one has to look on all sides to find them." "Be quite easy, Madame Seraphin. If I hear of any one, I will inform you. Good places are as difficult to find as good subjects;" then she added, mentally, "very likely I'd send you a poor girl to be starved to death in your hovel. Your master is too miserly and too wicked—to denounce, in one breath, this poor Louise and poor Germain." "I need not tell you," said Madame Seraphin, "how quiet our house is; a young girl gains much in living with us; and this Louise must have been an incarnate bad one, to have turned out so, notwithstanding all the good advice Mr. Ferrand gave her."

"Certainly; then depend upon me: if I hear any one spoken of that I think will answer, I will send her to you." "There is

one thing more," said Madame Seraphin; "Mr. Ferrand will prefer that this servant should have no family, because, you comprehend, having no occasion to go out, she will run less risk; so, if by chance she could be found, he would prefer an orphan, I suppose; in the first place, because it would be a good action, and then, because having no friends, she would have no pretext to go out. This miserable Louise is a good lesson to him, my poor Madame Pipelet. It is this that makes him so difficult in the choice of a domestic. Such a scandalous affair in a pious house like ours—how horrid! well, good-by; to night, when I go to see Mr. Bradamanté, I'll call upon Mother Burette." "Good-by, Madame Seraphin—you will certainly see him to night." Madame Seraphin took her departure.

"Isn't she crazy after Bradamanté," said Madame Pipelet. "What can she want with him? and wasn't he crazy for fear he should see her before he left for Normandy? I was afraid she wouldn't go, as Mr. Bradamanté expects the lady who came last night; I couldn't see her, but this time I'll try to unmask her—neither more nor less than I did with the lady who came to see the commandant. He has not had his foot here since. To teach him, I mean to burn his wood; yes, I will burn all your wood, disappointed coxcomb! get out, with your dirty twelve francs, and your robe de chambre. That did you a great deal of good. But who can this lady be, of Mr. Bradamanté's? A lady, or a common woman? I'd like to know, for I am as curious as a magpie. It is not my fault—God made me so. It is my character. Ah! hold; an idea, and a famous one too—to find out her name; I'll try it. But who comes here? Ah! it is my prince of lodgers. "Your servant, Mr. Rodolphe," said madame Pipelet, putting herself in the attitude of *carry arms*, the back of her left hand to her periwig.

It was Rodolphe, as yet ignorant of the death of d'Harville. "Good-day, Madame Pipelet," said he, on entering. "Mlle. Rigolette, is she at home? I wish to speak to her," "She? poor little puss, is she not always at home, and her work, then! Does she ever take a holiday?" "And how is Morel's wife? does she cheer up any?" "Yes, Mr. Rodolphe; many thanks to you, or to the protector of whom you are the agent, she and her children are so happy now. They are like fish in water; they have fire, air, good beds, good food, a nurse to take care of them, without

reckoning Mlle. Rigolette, who, in working like a little beaver, and without appearing to do so, keeps them under her eye; and besides, a negro doctor has been to see them. Eh, eh! Mr. Rodolphe, I said to myself, 'Ah! but this is the black doctor? he can feel their pulse without soiling his hands: but never mind, colour is nothing; he seems to be a first-rate—all the same?' He ordered a potion for Madame Morel, which relieved her at once." "Poor woman! she must be very sad." "Oh! yes, Mr. Rodolphe, what would you? her husband mad, and then her Louise in prison. Do you see, her Louise, it is her heart's grief; for an honest family it is terrible; and when I think that just now Madame Seraphin came here to say such things about her. If I had not had a gudgeon to make her swallow, the Seraphin, she would not have got off in this way, but for a quarter of an hour I gave her fair words. Didn't she have the brass to come and ask me if I knew of any young body to take the place of Louise, at this beggar of a notary's? Ain't she close and miserly? They want an orphan if she can be found. Do you know why, Mr. Rodolphe? Because she would never want to go out. But that is not it—trash, a lie! The truth is, that they want to get hold of a young girl, who, having no one to advise her, they'll grind her out of her wages at their pleasure. Isn't it true?" "Yes, yes," answered Rodolphe, in a thoughtful manner. Learning that Madame Seraphin sought an orphan to take the place of Louise, Rodolphe foresaw in this circumstance, a means, perhaps, certain of obtaining the punishment of the notary. While Madame Pipelet was speaking, he arranged the part Cecily had to play, as a principal instrument in the just punishment which he wished to inflict on the executioner of Louise Morel. "I was sure you would think as I did," said Madame Pipelet: "yes, I repeat it, and I would sooner die than send any one to them. Am I not right, Mr. Rodolphe?" "Madame Pipelet, will you render me a great service?" "Mr. Rodolphe, do you wish me to throw myself across the fire, curl my periwig with boiling oil? or would you prefer I should bite some one? speak, I am wholly yours, I and my heart; we are your slaves, except—"

"Make yourself easy, Madame Pipelet; this is not what I mean. I want a place for a young orphan. She is a stranger, she has never been in Paris, and I wish to send her to Ferrands." "You suffocate me! How! in his barrack? to this old miser's?"

"It is nevertheless a place. If the young girl should not like it, she can leave; but, at least, she will at once earn her living, and I shall be easy on her account."

"Marry, Mr. Rodolphe, it's your affair; you are warned. If, notwithstanding, you find the place good, you are the master; and, besides, I must be just—speaking of the notary—if there's something against, there's always something for. He is as miserly as a dog, hard as an ass, bigoted as a sacristan, it is true; but he is as honest as one can be. He gives small wages, but he pays like a man. The food is bad. In short, it is a house where one must work like a horse, but where there is no risk of a young girl's reputation. Louise was a chance!" "Madame Pipelet, I am going to confide a secret to your honour." "On the faith of Anastasia Pipelet, whose maiden name was Galimard, as true as there is a God in heaven, and that Alfred wears only green coats, I shall be as dumb as my dead aunt!"

"You must not say a word to your husband." "I swear it on the head of my old darling! If the motive is honest—" "Ah, Madame Pipelet." "It is between us—*life or death*, my prince of lodgers. Go on." "The young girl of whom I have spoken has committed a fault." "Understood! If I had not at fifteen married Alfred, I should have perhaps committed fifty—hundreds of faults. I, such as you see me. I was a real saltpetre, unchained. Happily, Pipelet extinguished me in his virtue: without that I should have committed follies. It is to say to you that if your young girl has only committed one fault, there is yet some hope." "I think so also. The young girl was a servant in Germany, at one of my relatives; the son of this relative has been the accomplice of the fault; you comprehend?"

"O yes, I comprehend—as if I had committed the fault!"

"The mother drove away the servant; but the young man was mad enough to leave his paternal home, and bring this poor girl to Paris."

"What would you have? These young folks—"

"After this came reflections—so much the wiser, as the money they had was all gone. My young relative called upon me; I consented to give him enough to return to his mother, but on condition that he should leave this girl here, and I would endeavour to place her."

"I could not have done better for my own son, if Pipelet had

been pleased to grant me one." "I am enchanted with your approbation; only as the young girl has no recommendations, and that she is a stranger, it is very difficult to find a place. If you would tell Madame Seraphin that one of your relations in Germany had addressed and recommended this young girl to you, and the notary would take her into his service, I should be doubly pleased. Cecily—this is her name—having been only led astray, would be more correct, certainly, in a house so strict as that of the notary. It is for this reason I wish to see her enter the service of Mr. Ferrand. I need not tell you that, presented by you—a person so respectable—" "Ah! Mr. Rodolphe—" "So estimable—" "Ah, my prince of lodgers—" "That this young girl, recommended by you, will be certainly accepted by Madame Seraphin—" "Understood. Ah! well done; it suits me. Stick the Seraphin! So much the better. I have a bone to pick with her. I will answer for the affair, Mr. Rodolphe. I'll make her see stars at noon. I'll tell her that, for how long a time I don't know, I have a cousin established in Germany, one of the Galimards—my family name; that I have just received the news that she is defunct, her husband also, and that their daughter who is now an orphan, will be on my hands immediately." "Very well. You will take Cecily yourself to Mr. Ferrand, without saying anything more to Madame Seraphin. As it is twenty years since you have seen your cousin, you will have nothing to answer except that, since her departure for Germany, you have received no news from her." "Ah, now, but if the young woman only jabbers German."

"She speaks French perfectly; I will give her her lesson; all you have to do is to recommend her strongly to Madame Seraphin; or, rather, I think, no—for she would suspect, perhaps, that you wished to force her." "To whom do you tell this? That's the way I always served cajolers. If they had asked nothing, I do not say—" "This always happens. You must say then, that Cecily is an orphan and a stranger, very young and very handsome; that she is going to be a very heavy charge for you; that you feel but slight affection for her, as you had quarrelled with your cousin, and that you are not much obliged for such a present as she has made you."

"Oh, how cunning you are! But be easy—we two, we'll fix the pair. I say, Mr. Rodolphe, how we understand each other—

we two! When I think that if you had been of my age at the time when I was a real saltpetre—faith, I don't know—and you?" "Bah! if Mr. Pipelet—" "Ah, well, yes! poor dear man. You don't know a new infamy of this Cabrion? But I will tell you this directly. As to your young girl, be easy; I bet that I'll lead Seraphin to ask me to place my relation with them." "If you succeed my dear Madame Pipelet, there is a hundred francs for you. I am not rich, but—" "Do you mock me, Mr. Rodolphe? Do you think I do this from interested feelings? Oh, no, it is pure friendship—a hundred francs!" "But judge, then, that if I had this young girl for a long time under my charge, it would cost me more than this, at the end of some months."

"It is, then, to oblige you that I shall take the hundred francs, Mr. Rodolphe; but it was a famous ticket in the lottery for us when you came to this house. I can cry from the roof, you are the prince of lodgers. Holloa! a hack, it is doubtless the little lady for Mr. Bradamanté. She came yesterday; I could not see her. I am going to trifle with her, to make her show her face; without counting that I have invented a way to find out her name. You'll see me work; it will amuse you." "No, no, Madame Pipelet, the name and face of this lady is of no importance to me," said Rodolphe, retreating to the back part of the lodge.

"Madame," cried Anastasia, rushing out before the lady, who entered, "where are you going, madame?" "To Mr. Bradamante's," said the female, visibly annoyed at thus being stopped in the passage. "He is not at home." "It is impossible; I have an appointment with him." "He is not at home." You are mistaken." "I am not mistaken at all," trying all the time to catch a glimpse of her face. "Mr. Bradamanté has gone out—very certainly gone out—that is to say, except for a lady." "Well, it is I! you annoy me; let me pass." "Your name, madame? I shall soon know if it is the person Mr. Bradamanté told me to pass in. If you have not that name, you must step over my body before you shall enter." "He told you my name!" cried the woman, with as much surprise as inquietude. "Yes, madame." "What imprudence!" murmured the young woman; then after a moment's pause, she added impatiently, in a low voice, and as if she feared to be overheard, "Well, my name is Madame d'Orbigny."

At this name Rodolphe shuddered. It was the name of the stepmother of Madame d'Harville. Instead of remaining in the shade, he advanced; and by the light of the day and the lamp, he easily recognised this woman, from the description that Clemence had more than once given him. "Madame d'Orbigny?" repeated Madame Pipelet, "that's the name; you can go up, madame." The stepmother of Clemence passed rapidly before the lodge. "And see," cried the porteress, in a triumphant manner; "gammoned the citizen, know her name—she is called d' Orbigny. But what is the matter? You are quite pensive." "This lady has been here before?" asked Rodolphe.

"Yes, last night; as soon as she was gone, Mr. Bradamanté went out, probably to take his place in the diligence for to-day; for on his return, last night, he begged me to go with his trunk to the office, as he could not depend upon the little devil Tortillard." "And where is Mr. Bradamanté going to? do you know?" "To Normandy—to Alençon." Rodolphe remembered that the estate of Aubiers, where M. d'Orbigny resided, was situated in Normandy. There could be no doubt the quack was going to see the father of Clemence for no good purpose.

"It is the departure of Mr. Bradamanté, which will finely provoke the Seraphin," said Madame Pipelet. "She is like a mad wolf after Cèsar, who avoids her as much as he can; for he told me to conceal from her that he was going to leave to-night; thus, when she returns, she will find nobody at home. I'll profit by this to speak of your young woman, Cecily." "Now I go to see Mademoiselle Rigolette," said Rodolphe; and singularly preoccupied with the visit of Madame d'Orbigny to Polidori, he ascended to the fourth story.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FIRST GRIEF OF RIGOLETTE.

The chamber of Rigolette shone, as always, with the same coquettish nicety; the heavy silver watch, placed on the chimney, marked four o'clock; the very cold weather having passed, the economical workwoman had not put any fire in her stove. Hardly could one see from the window any part of the sky, the rough irregular masses of roofs, garrets, and high chimneys, which, on the other side of the street formed the horizon.

Suddenly a ray of the sun, astray, as it were, glancing between two high roofs, came to light up, for some moments, with its purple tints, the windows of the young girl's chamber.

But alas! notwithstanding the provoking joyousness of this ray of the sun, the two canaries flew about with an unquiet air, and contrary to custom, did not sing.

It was because, contrary to custom, also, Rigolette did not sing. None of the three warbled without the others. Almost always the fresh and matinal song of the one awoke the song of the others, who, more lazy did not leave their nests at so early an hour. Then it was a defiance, a contest of clear, sonorous, brilliant, silvery notes, in which the birds did not always have the advantage.

Rigolette sang no more, because that, for the first time in her life, she experienced *sorrow*.

Until then, the sight of the misery of the Morels had often afflicted her, but such scenes are too familiar to the poorer classes to make any durable impression.

After having each day assisted these unfortunates as much as was in her power, sincerely wept with them, and for them, the young girl at once affected and satisfied: affected with their misfortunes, and satisfied with her conduct towards them. But this was no *sorrow*. Soon the natural gaiety of Rigolette resumed its empire. And, besides, without egotism, she found herself so happy in her little chamber, on leaving the horrible den of the Morels, that her ephemeral sadness was soon dissipated.

Before we inform the reader of the cause of the first grief of Rigolette, we wish to assure him completely of the virtue of this young girl. We regret to use this word, virtue—a grave, pompous, and solemn word, which always carries along with it ideas of a grievous sacrifice, of a painful contest with the passions, austere meditations on the end of things here below. Such was not the virtue of Rigolette. She had neither struggled nor meditated. She had worked, laughed and sung.

It depended, as she said to Rodolphe, on a question of time. She had not the leisure to be in love.

Before all, gay, industrious, managing: order, work, gaiety, had, unknown to her, defended, sustained, saved her. Perhaps this morality will be found light, easy, and joyous; but what matters the cause, provided the effect subsists? What matters the direction of the roots, if the flower blooms brilliant and perfumed?

* * * * *

But let us descend from our utopian sphere, and return to the cause of Rigolette's first grief.

Except Germain, a good and serious young man, the neighbours of the Grisette had taken at first, her original familiarity, her offers of good neighbourhood, for very significant encouragement; but these gentlemen had been obliged to acknowledge, with as much surprise as vexation, that they found in Rigolette an amiable and gay companion for their Sunday recreations, a kind neighbour, but nothing more. Their surprise and vexation quailed by degrees before the frank and charming disposition of the grisette and then, as she judiciously told Rodolphe, her neighbours were proud on Sunday to have on their arm a pretty girl who did them honour (Rigolette cared little for appearances) and who only cost the partaking of their modest pleasures, which her presence and sprightliness enhanced. Besides, the dear girl was so easily contented: in the days of penury she dined so well and so gaily on a piece of hot cake which she ate with all the force of her little white teeth; after which she amused herself so much with a walk on the boulevards or in the arcades.

François Germain alone founded no foolish hopes on the familiarity of the young girl; either from penetration or delicacy of mind, he saw at once all that could be agreeable in the mode of living offered by Rigolette. That which, of course, would happen, happened. He became desperately in love with his neighbour, without daring to speak of this love. Far from imitating his predecessors, who soon convinced of the vanity of their pursuits, had consoled themselves elsewhere, Germain had deliciously enjoyed his in intimacy with the young girl, passing with her not only Sundays, but every evening that he was not occupied.

During these long hours, Rigolette had conducted herself, as always, lively and gay; Germain, tender, attentive, serious, and often a little melancholy. This sadness was the only inconvenience; for his manners, naturally distinguished, could not be compared to the ridiculous pretensions of Girandeau the travelling clerk, nor to the noisy eccentricities of Cabrion; but Girandeau by his inexhaustible loquacity, and the painter by his hilarity not less so, had the advantage of Germain, whose gentle gravity awed a little his lively neighbour.

Rigolette had not, then, had, until now, any marked prefer-

ence for either of her three lovers; but as she was not wanting in judgment, she found that Germain alone united all the qualities necessary to make a reasonable woman happy.

We will now say why Rigolette was sad, and why neither she nor her birds sang.

Her round and blooming face was rather pale; her large black eyes, ordinarily bright and sparkling, were cast down and dull; her expression showed unaccustomed fatigue. She had worked more than half the night. From time to time she regarded sadly a letter placed open upon a table beside her; this letter was from Germain, and contained what follows:

Prison de la Concierge.

"MADEMOISELLE,

"The place from whence I write will tell you the extent of my misfortune. I am incarcerated as a thief—I am criminal in the eyes of the world, though I dare to write to you. It would be frightful for me to think that you also looked upon me as a degraded being. I implore you, do not condemn me before having read this letter. If you cast me off, this last blow will overwhelm me quite. Here is what has taken place:

"For some time past I have not lived in the Rue du Temple, but I knew through poor Louise that the Morel family, for whom we were so much interested, were more and more wretched. Alas, my pity for these poor people has ruined me. I do not repent it, but my fate is a cruel one. Yesterday, I remained quite late at Ferrand's occupied with some pressing writings. In the room where I worked was a bureau; each day my patron locked up in it the work I had done. This night he appeared restless and agitated; he said to me, 'Do not go until these accounts are finished' you will place them in the bureau, of which I leave you the key; and he went out.

"My work being finished, I opened the drawer to put it away; mechanically my eyes fell upon an open letter, where I read the name of *Jerome Morel* the artisan. I confess, seeing that it referred, to this unfortunate man, I had the indiscretion to read this letter; I thus learned that the artisan was to be arrested the next morning for a note of thirteen hundred francs, at the suit of Ferrand, who, under an assumed name, would cause him to be imprisoned. This notice was from the agent of my patron. I knew the situation of the family well enough to foresee what a horrible blow

this would be for them. I was as sorry as I was indignant. Unfortunately I saw in the same drawer an open box containing some gold; there was about two thousand francs. At this moment I heard Louise on the staircase; without reflecting on the gravity of my action, profiting by the occasion which chance offered, I took thirteen hundred francs; I went into the passage and placed the money into the hand of Louise, telling her, 'Your father is to be arrested to-morrow at daylight for thirteen hundred francs; here they are; save him, but do not say you had this money from me. Ferrand is a bad man.'

"You see, mademoiselle, my intention was good, though my conduct was culpable; I conceal nothing. Now hear my excuse.

"For a long time, by economy, I had saved and place at the banker's the small sum of fifteen hundred francs. Almost a week ago, he notified to me that, the term of his obligation towards me being arrived, he held my funds subject to order, if I did not wish them to remain with him.

"I thus possessed more than I took from the notary. I could the next day replace it; but the cashier of the banker did not reach his office before twelve o'clock, and at daybreak they were to arrest poor Morel. It was necessary, then, to place him in a position to pay, otherwise, even if I were to go and take him from prison, the arrest might have already killed his wife; besides, the very considerable expense attending this would have been at the expense of the artisan. You comprehend, that all these misfortunes would not have happened, if I could have returned the thirteen hundred francs before Mr. Ferrand discovered his loss.

"I left the house no longer under the impression of indignation and pity which had made me act in this manner. I reflected on all the dangers of my position; a thousand fears assailed me. I knew the severity of the notary; he could, after my departure, return and go to the bureau, and find out the *theft*: for in his eyes, to the eyes of everybody, it is a theft.

"These ideas quite upset me; although it was late, I ran to the banker's to beg him to return my money instantly. I should have explained this extraordinary demand, afterwards I would have returned to Mr. Ferrand and replaced the money I had taken.

"The banker, by a fatal chance, had been for two days at Belleville, at his country house; I awaited the daylight with in-

creasing agony; at length I arrived at Belleville. Everything seemed leagued against me; the banker had left for Paris; I flew back, got my money, and went to Mr. Ferrand's—all was discovered.

"But this is only part of my misfortunes: now the notary accuses me of having stolen fifteen thousand francs in notes, which were, he said, in the drawer with the two thousand francs in gold. It is a false accusation, an infamous lie! I avow myself guilty of the first charge, but by all that is sacred, I swear to you, mademoiselle, that I am innocent of the second. I have seen no bills in the drawer; there was only the gold, as I said before.

"Such is the truth, mademoiselle; I am under charge of an overwhelming accusation, and yet I affirm that you ought to think me incapable of telling a falsehood. But will you believe me? Alas, Mr. Ferrand told me, he who has stolen a small sum can easily steal a large one, and his words deserves no confidence.

"I have always found you so good and devoted to the unfortunate, mademoiselle, I know you are so faithful and frank, that your heart will guide you, I hope, in the appreciation of the truth—I ask nothing more. Give faith to my words, and you will find me as much to be pitied as blamed; for I repeat, my intention was good; circumstances impossible to foresee have ruined me.

"Ah! Mademoiselle Rigolette, I am very unhappy. If you knew what kind of people I am destined to live among until the day of my trial. Yesterday they took me to a place which is called the depôt of the Prefecture of Police. I cannot tell you what I experienced when, after having mounted a gloomy staircase, I arrived before a door with an iron wicket, which they opened, and then it was soon closed upon me. I was so much troubled, that at first I could distinguish nothing. A hot, disagreeable air struck me in the face; I heard a great noise of voices mingled with sinister laughs, accents of rage, and common songs; I held myself immovable near the door, looking at the stone flaggings, daring neither to advance nor raise my eyes, believing that every one was looking at me. They did not trouble themselves about me; one prisoner more or less is of no consequence to them; at length I raised my head. What horrible figures, how many clothed in rags! how many ragged clothes soiled with mud! All the externals of vice and misery. There were about forty or

fifty, seated, standing, or lying on benches fast to the walls; vagabonds, robbers, assassins, in short, all those who had been arrested that night or day.

"When they perceived me, I found a sad consolation in seeing that they did not recognise me as one of their fellows. Some of them looked at me with an insolent and jeering air; then they began to talk among themselves in a low tone, and in a hideous language I did not comprehend. At the end of a short time, the most audacious of them came and struck me on the shoulder, and asked me for some money to pay my welcome.

"I gave them some money, in hopes to purchase repose; it was not enough; they required more; I refused. Then several of them surrounded me loading me with threats and insults; they were about to throw themselves upon me, when happily, attracted by the noise, a keeper entered; I complained to him; he made them give back the money I had given them, and told me, if I wished I could for a trifle, be put alone in a cell. I accepted his offer with gratitude, and left these bandits in the midst of their threats for the future. The keeper placed me in a cell, where I passed the rest of the night. It is from hence that I write you this morning, Mademoiselle Rigolette; immediately after my examination, I shall be conducted to another prison, *La Force*, where I fear I shall meet many of my companions of the Depôt. The keeper, interested by my grief, and by my tears, has promised me to send you this letter, although it is strictly forbidden. I expect, Mademoiselle Rigolette, a last service of your old friendship, if now you should not blush at the word.

"If you are willing to grant my demand, here it is.

"You will receive with this a small key, and a line for the porter of the house where I reside, Boulevard Saint Denis, No. 11. I inform him that you can dispose of all that belongs to me, and that he must obey your orders. He will show you my room. You will have the kindness to open my secretaire with the key I send you; you will find a large envelope covering many papers, which I wish you to take care of; one of them was destined for you, as you will see by the address; others have been written concerning you, in our happy days. Do not be angry; you never would have known it.

"I beg you, also, to take the small sum of money which

-etaire, also a bag of satin, enclosing a little cra-

vat of orange silk, that you wore on our last Sunday walk, and that you gave me the day I left the Rue du Temple. I wish, in short, that, with the exception of some linen, which you will send to *La Force*, you would sell the furniture and effects I possess: acquitted or condemned, I shall not be the less ruined and obliged to leave Paris. Where shall I go? What are my resources? God knows.

"Madame Bouvard, of the Temple, who has already sold and bought for me, will doubtless arrange all this; she's an honest woman; this arrangement will spare you much embarrassment, for I know how precious your time is.

"I have paid my rent in advance; I beg you, then, to give a small gratuity to the porter. Pardon me, mademoiselle, for imposing on you with these details, but you are the only person in the world to whom I dare and can address myself.

"I might have asked this service from one of the clerks at Mr. Ferrand's, but I feared his discretion respecting sundry papers; many of them concern you, as I have already told you; others have reference to some sad events of my life.

"Ah, believe me, Mademoiselle Rigolette, if you grant it, this last proof of your former affection will be my sole consolation in the great trouble which crushes me; in spite of myself, I hope you will not refuse me.

"I ask, also, permission to write you sometimes—it will be so soothing, so precious, to be able to pour out, to disclose to a benevolent heart, the sorrows which overwhelm me.

"Alas, I am alone in the world; no one feels any interest in me. This isolated condition was always painful—judge now!

"And yet, I am honest; and I have the consciousness of never having injured any one; of having always, even at the peril of my life, shown my aversion for evil, as you will see by the papers, which I beg you to keep, and which you can read. But when I say this, who will believe me? Mr. Ferrand is respected by everybody; his reputation is well established; he will crush me; I resign myself, in advance to my fate.

"In short, Mademoiselle Rigolette, if you believe me, you will not have, I hope, any contempt for me; you will pity me, and you will sometimes think of a sincere friend; then, if I cause you so much pity, perhaps you will push your generosity so far as to come some day—*a Sunday* (alas! what re-

collections does this word awaken) to *brave* the 'parloir' of my prison.

"But no, no; to see you in such a place — I never can dare. Yet you are so kind—that—

"I am obliged to stop, and send you this, with the key and the note to the porter, which I shall write in haste, as the keeper has come to tell me I am to be taken before the judge. Adieu, adieu, Mademoiselle Rigolette. Do not cast me off. I have no hope but in you alone.—FRANCOIS GERMAIN.

"P.S. If you answer, address your letter to the prison of La Force."

The reader can now comprehend the cause of the first grief of Rigolette. Her excellent heart was profoundly affected at calamity of which she had not had, until then, any suspicion. She believed implicitly in the entire veracity of the story of Germain, the unfortunate son of the brigand. Not very severe, she even found that her old neighbour enormously exaggerated his fault. To save an unfortunate father, he had taken the money, which he knew he could return. This action, in the eyes of the grisette, was only generous.

By one of those inconsistences natural to women, and, above all, to those of her class, this young girl, who until then had felt for Germain, as for her other neighbours, a joyous and cordial friendship, now acknowledged a decided preference.

As soon as she knew he was unfortunate, unjustly accused, and a prisoner, she thought no more of his rivals.

With Rigolette it was not yet love; it was a lively sincere affection, filled with commiseration and resolute devotion: a very new sentiment for her, from the bitterness which was joined to it. Such was the situation of Rigolette, when Rodolphe entered her room, after having discreetly knocked at the door.

CHAPTER XIII.

FRIENDSHIP.

"GOOD-DAY, neighbour," said Rodolphe; "I hope I do not disturb you?" "No, my neighbour; I am, on the contrary, very

glad you have come, for I have much sorrow." "Why do I find you pale; you seem to have been weeping?"

"I think I have wept. There is reason for it. Poor Germain! Here, read;" and Rigolette handed to Rodolphe the letter of the prisoner. "If this is not enough to break one's heart! You told me you were interested in him. Now is the time to shew it," added she, while Rodolphe read attentively. "Must it be that this villain, Ferrand, is thirsting for the blood of everybody! First it was Louise, now it is Germain. Oh! I am not cruel; but if some misfortune should happen to this notary I should be content. To accuse such an honest young man of having stolen 1300 francs; Germain—truth and honesty itself, and then so regular, so mild, so sad; is he not to be pitied. Among all these scoundrels, in his prison. Ah! Mr. Rodolphe, from to-day I begin to see that all is not gold that glitters." "And what do you mean to do?" "Why, everything he asks, and that as soon as possible. I should have already been off, but for this work which I must finish, and which I am going to take to the Rue St. Honore, as I go to Germain's room to get the papers he speaks of. I have passed a part of the night in working, so as to gain some hours in advance. I am going to have so many things to do, besides my work, I must get in readiness. In the first place, Madame Morel wishes me to see Louise in her prison. It is, perhaps, very difficult, but I will try. Unfortunately, I do not know who to address myself to." "I have thought of that." "You, my neighbour?" "Here is a permission." "What happiness! Can you not get me one also for the prison of this unfortunate Germain? it will give him so much pleasure." "I will give you, also, the means to see Germain." "Oh! thank you, Mr. Rodolphe." You are not afraid, then, to go to his prison?" "Very certain, my heart will beat the first time. But never mind. When Germain was happy, did I not always find him ready to anticipate all my wishes? To take me to the theatre: or a walk; to read to me at night; to assist me in arranging my flowers; to wax my floor. Well, he is in trouble; now it is my turn; a poor little mouse like me can't do much; I know it; but all I can do I will do; he can count on it, he shall see if I am a good friend! Hold, Mr. Rodolphe, there is one thing that vexes me: it is his suspicion: to believe me capable of despising him. I! This old miser of a notary accuses him of theft; I know it is

not true. The letter of Germain, does it not prove as clear as day, that he is innocent; it was only to see him, to know him, to be sure that he is incapable of doing a wrong action. One must be as wicked as Ferrand to maintain such false assertions." "Bravo! my neighbour. I like your indignation." "Oh! stop; I wish I was a man, to go and see this notary, and say to him: 'Ah! you maintain that Germain has robbed you; well, look here, take that! old liar, he won't steal this from you! And I'd beat him to a mummy." "You'd have very expeditious justice," said Rodolphe, smiling at the animation of Rigolette. "It is so revolting; and, as Germain says in his letter, everybody will take the part of his patron against him, because be is rich, and thought much of, while Germain is a poor young man without protection; unless you come to his assistance, Mr. Rodolphe, you, who know so many benevolent persons. Can nothing be done?" "He must wait for his trial. Once acquitted, numerous proofs of interest will be shown him, I assure you. But listen: I know from experience that I can count on your discretion."

"Oh, yes, Mr. Rodolphe. I have never been a babbler."

"Well, no one must know, even Germain himself must be ignorant, that he has friends who are watching over him." "Really?" "Very powerful and very devoted." "It would give him so much courage to know it." "Doubtless; but perhaps he could not keep the secret. Then, Ferrand, alarmed, would be on his guard, his suspicions aroused; and as he is very cunning, he would make it very difficult to get at him; which would be lamentable, for not only must the innocence of Germain be proved, but his calumniator unmasked."

"I understand you, Mr. Rodolphe."

"Just so with Louise; I bring you this permission to see her, so that you can tell her not to speak to any one of what she has revealed to me. She will know what this means." "That is sufficient, Mr. Rodolphe." "In a word, let Louise be careful not to complain in her prison of the conduct of her master, it is very important. But she must conceal nothing from the lawyer who will be sent by me to prepare for her defence; recommend all this to her."

"Be quite easy, neighbour—I will forget nothing. I have a good memory. But I speak of kindness! it is you who are good and generous. Any one in trouble, you are there at once."

"I have told you, I am only a poor clerk; when, in roaming about, I find good people who deserve protection, I inform a benevolent person who has all confidence in me, and they are assisted." "And where do you lodge, now that you have given up your room to the Morels?" "In furnished lodgings." "Oh! how I do detest that. To be where everybody else has been—it is as if everybody had been in your own room." "I am only there at night, and then—" "I conceive—it is less disagreeable. *My home*, Mr. Rodolphe, rendered me so happy; I had arranged a life so tranquil, that I should not have believed it possible to have a sorrow. Yet you see. No, I cannot tell you what a blow the misfortunes of Germain have caused me. I have seen the Morels and others—much to be pitied, it is true; but misery is misery; among poor folks they expect it; it does not surprise them, and they help one another as they can. But to see a poor young man, honest and good, who has been your friend for a long time—to see him accused of theft, and imprisoned pell-mell with rogues and cut-throats. Ah, Mr. Rodolphe, it is true, I have no strength against this; it is a misfortune I have never thought of; it upsets me."

And the large eyes of Rigolette filled with tears.

"Courage, your gaiety will return when your friend is acquitted." "Oh! he must be acquitted. They will only have to read to the judges the letter which he has written to me— that will be enough, will it not, Mr. Rodolphe?" "In reality, this simple and touching letter has all the marks of truth; you must let me take a copy; it will be useful in his defence."

"Certainly, Mr. Rodolphe. If I did not write like a real cat, in spite of the lessons Germain gave me, I should propose to copy it for you; but my writing is so coarse, so crooked, and, besides, there are so many faults."

"I only ask you to lend me this letter until to-morrow."

"There it is, sir; but you will take care of it? I have burned all the billet doux which Cabrion and Girandeau wrote me at the commencement of our acquaintance, with bleeding hearts and doves on the top of the paper; but this poor letter of Germain, I will take good care of it, and the others also, if he writes them. For in truth, Mr. Rodolphe, it is a proof in my favour that he asks these little services."

"Without doubt it proves that you are the best little friend that

one can have. But, I reflect—instead of going by-and-by alone to Germain's shall I accompany you?" "With pleasure, my neighbour. The night approaches and I prefer not to be alone in the streets after dark, especially as I have to go near the Palais Royal. But, to go so far, it will be tiresome and fatiguing to you, perhaps?" "Not at all; we will take a hack." "Really, oh! how it will amuse me to go in a carriage, if I had not so much sorrow. And this is the first day since I lived here that I have not sung. My birds are all astonished. Poor little things, they do not know what it means; two or three times *Papa Cretu* has sung a little to entice me; I wished to amuse him—ah, well, yes; after a moment I began to weep; *Ramonette* then tried, but I could answer no more."

"What singular names you have given your birds! Papa Cretu? Ramonette?" "Rodolphe, my birds are the joy of my solitude; I have given them the name of the good people who were the joy of my childhood, and who have been also my best friends; without reckoning, that *Papa Cretu*, and *Ramonette*, were as gay and tuneful as the birds of heaven."

"Ah, now! yes, I recollect—your adopted parents were thus called." "Yes, my neighbour, these are ridiculous names for birds—I know it, but it only concerns me. Now, it was on this very subject that I saw Germain had a good heart. Girandeau and Cabrion were for ever making jokes on the names of my birds: 'To call a canary *Papa Cretu*, did you ever; Cabrion never finished, and then he would laugh—'If it were a cock,' said he, 'very well, you might call it Cretu (comb). It is the same with the other one; Ramonette sounds too much like Ramoneur, (a chimney sweep.') At length he made me so angry that I would not go out with him for two Sundays, just to teach him; and I told him, very seriously, that if he recommenced his jokes, which were unpleasant to me, we should never go out together again." "What a courageous resolution!"

"It cost me a good deal—I, who looked for my Sunday excursions—I had a sorrowful heart, I tell you—to remain home all alone of a fine day; but never mind, I preferred rather to sacrifice my Sunday than to continue to hear Cabrion make fun of what I respected. Except for this, and the ideas attached to it, I would have preferred to give other names to my birds. There is, above all, one name I should have loved to adoration—that of

Colibri (humming bird). Well, I cannot do it, because never shall I call my birds otherwise than Cretu and Ramonette: it would seem to me that I sacrificed them, that I forget my kind, adopted parents; is it not so, Mr. Rodolphe?" "You are right —a thousand times right—and Germain did not make fun of these names?"

"On the contrary, only the first time, it appeared droll to him, as to every one else—it is very simple; but when I explained my reasons, as I had explained them to Cabrion, the tears came into his eyes. From that day I said, 'Germain has a kind heart; he has nothing against him but his sadness.' And do you see, Mr. Rodolphe, he has brought me misfortune to reproach him for his sadness. Then I did not comprehend how one could be sad. Now I comprehend it but too well. But now, my work is finished, will you give me my shawl."

"We shall go in a carriage, and I will bring you back."

"It is true, we shall go and return quicker; it will be so much time gained." "But, on reflection, how are you going to manage? your work will suffer from your visits to the prisons." "Oh, no, no; I have laid my plans. In the first place, I have my Sundays; I will go and see Louise and Germain on these days—it will serve me for a walk and recreation; then, in the week, I shall go to the prison once or twice; each time will cost me three good hours, will it not? Well, to make up for this, I will work one hour more each day, and I will go bed at twelve o'clock instead of eleven, that will give me a clear gain of seven or eight hours each week, which I can use in going to see Louise and Germain. You see, I am richer than I appear to be," added Rigolette, smiling. "And do you not fear this will fatigue you?" "Bah! I can do it; one can do anything; and, besides, it will not last for ever." "Here is your shawl. I shall not be so indiscreet as yesterday—I shall not bring my lips too close to this charming neck." "Ah, my neighbour! yesterday—one could laugh; but to-day is different: take care, you prick me." "Come, the pin is crooked." "Well, take another; there, on the pincushion. Ah! I forget: will you do me a favour."

"Command me." "Make me a good pen, very coarse, so that I can, on my return, write to this poor Germain that his commissions are executed. He shall have my letter to-morrow morning early." "There, on the table, the knife is in the

drawer. Stop, I am going to light my candle, for it grows quite dark."

"I shall want it to mend the pen." "And, besides, I can't see to tie my bonnet." Rigolette took a match and lit an end of candle which was in a very shining candlestick."

"Diable! wax candle, my neighbour—what luxury."

"For all I burn, it cost me a trifle more than a tallow candle, and it is so much neater." "Not much dearer?"

"O dear! no. I buy these ends of candles by the pound, and a half pound serves me a month." "But," said Rodolphe, mending the pen carefully, while the grisette tied her bonnet before the glass, "I see no preparations for your dinner."

"I haven't a shadow of hunger. I took a cup of milk this morning: I will take another to-night, with a little bread; I shall have enough." "Will you not come and take dinner with me, when we come away from Germain's?"

"I thank you my neighbour, I have the heart too full; another time, with pleasure. What do you say to the evening of the day poor Germain comes out of prison? I invite myself, and after ward we will go to the play. Is it said?"

"It is said, my neighbour; I assure you that I shall not forget the engagement. But to-day—you refuse me?" "Yes Rodolphe, I should be too stupid to-day: besides, it would take up too much time. Only think—it is now, if ever, that I must not be lazy." "Come, I give up this pleasure for to-day."

"Here, take my bundle; go before; I will shut the door."

"Here is an excellent pen—now, your bundle."

"Take care you don't tumble it—hold it in your hand—in this way, lightly—well; pass on, I will light you." And Rodolphe descended preceded by Rigolette. As they passed the lodge, they saw Pipelet, who with his arms hanging down, advanced towards them from the bottom of the alley; in one hand he held the sign, which announced to the public that he was in partnership with Cabrion; and in the other, the portrait of the infernal painter.

The despair of Alfred was so overwhelming, that his chin rested on his breast, and nothing could be seen but the top of his broad brimmed chapeau. On seeing him approach thus, with his head down, towards Rodolphe and Rigolette, one would have said it was a goat, preparing for combat. Anastasia soon appeared on the threshold, and cried, at the sight of her husband, "Well, old

darling! here you are, hey! what did the commissary say to you? Alfred! but pay attention, now, you are going to poke yourself against my prince of lodgers: who has stolen your eyes? Pardon Mr. Rodolphe, it is this beggar of a Cabrion who stupifies him more and more—he certainly will make him turn to a jackass—the dear man. Alfred; but, answer, then? At this voice, so dear to his heart, Pipelet raised his head: his features were imprinted with a melancholy bitterness. "What did the Commissary say to you?" repeated Anastasia. "Anastasia, you must collect the little we possess, clasp our friends in our arms, pack our trunks, and expatriate ourselves from France: my beloved France! for, sure now of impunity, the monster is capable of pursuing me everywhere." "How! the commissary!" "The commissary!" cried Pipelet, with savage indignation; he laughed in my face."

"Your face! an aged man, who has so respectable an air, that you'd look as stupid as a goose, if one did not know your virtues."

"Well, notwithstanding that, when I had respectfully deposed before him my heap of complaints and griefs against this infernal Cabrion, this magistrate, after having looked at, laughing, yes, laughing; and I dare to say it laughing indecently; the sign and the portrait, which I produced as justificatory of my complaint this magistrate replied, 'My good man, this Cabrion is a funny fellow; he is a "farceur;" pay no attention to his jokes. I advise you, now, in a friendly manner, to laugh at them,' for really there is cause!" 'To laugh sir,' cried I, 'to laugh,' but grief is devouring one—they embitter my existence, those scoundrels—they pester me—I demand that they be locked up, that they be exiled at least, from my street.' At these words the commissary smiled, and obligingly opened the door. I understood this gesture of the magistrate, and here I am." "Magistrate of nothing at all!" cried Madame Pipelet. "All is finished! Anastasia, all is finished! No more hope. There is no longer any justice in France. I am atrociously sacrificed!" and, by way of peroration, Pipelet threw, with all his strength, the portrait and sign to the end of the alley. Rodolphe and Rigolette had, in the obscurity, slightly smiled at the despair of Pipelet. After having addressed some words of consolation to Alfred, whom Anastasia was calming in the best way she could, the prince of lodgers left the house of the Rue du Temple with Rigolette, and got into a carriage to go to the residence of François Germain.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WILL.

FRANCOIS GERMAIN lived on the Boulevard Saint Denis. Madame Mathieu, diamond broker, lived in the same house as Germain. During the long ride from the Rue du Temple to the Rue Saint Honore, where the woman lived who furnished Rigolette with work, Rodolphe was able to appreciate still more the excellent feelings of the young girl. Like all characters instinctively good and devoted, she was not conscious of the delicacy, the generosity of her conduct, which seemed to her quite natural.

Nothing had been easier for Rodolphe than to have made a liberal provision for Rigolette, as well for her present wants as the future, so that she could have gone charitably to console Louise and Germain, without counting the time she lost in these visits from her work, her only resource; but the prince feared to weaken the merit of the grisette's devotion in rendering it too easy; quite decided to recompense the rare and charming qualities which he had discovered in her, he wished to follow her to the end of this new and interesting trial. At the end of an hour, the carriage, on its return from the Rue Saint Honore, stopped on the Boulevard Saint Denis, before a house of modest appearance.

Rodolphe assisted Rigolette to alight: she entered the porter's lodge, and communicated to him the intentions of Germain, without forgetting the promised gratuity. From his amenity of disposition, Germain was every-where loved. The porter was much concerned to learn that the house should lose so honest and quiet a lodger. The grisette, furnished with a light, rejoined her companion; the porter was to follow, after a little while, to receive instructions. The chamber of Germain was on the fourth story. On arriving at the door, Rigolette said to Rodolphe, giving him the key, "Here, my neighbour, open—my hand trembles too much. You will laugh at me; but, in thinking that poor Germain will never return here, it seems to me I am about to enter the chamber of the dead." "Come, be reasonable, now, have no such ideas!" "I was wrong, but it was stronger than I," and she wiped away a tear. Without being so much moved as his companion, Rodolphe, nevertheless, experienced a painful impression on entering this modest apartment.

Knowing how he had been pursued by the accomplices of the

Brigand, he knew that this unfortunate young man must have passed many sad hours in this solitude. Rigolette placed the light on the table. Nothing could be more plain than the furniture of his sleeping-room, composed of a bed, a commode, a secretary of black walnut, four straw-bottomed chairs, and a table; white cotton curtains covered the windows and the alcove; the only ornaments on the mantelpiece were a decanter and a glass. From the appearance of the bed, which was made, it could be seen that Germain had thrown himself upon it without taking off his clothes the night preceding his arrest.

"Poor fellow!" said Rigolette, sadly, examining, with interest the interior of the chamber; "it is easily to be seen that he no longer has me for a neighbour. It is in order, but not neat; there is dust everywhere, the curtains are smoked, the windows are dirty the floor is not washed. Ah, what a difference! Rue du Temple, it was not handsome, but it was more gay, because everything shone with neatness, like in my own room." "It was because you were there, to give your advice." "But see, now," cried Rigolette, showing the bed, "he did not go to rest the other night, so much was he disturbed. Look here! this handkerchief, which he has left, has been steeped in tears. This is plain to be seen;" and she took it, adding, "Germain has kept a little orange-silk cravat of mine, which I gave him when we were happy; I am sure he will not be angry." "On the contrary, he will be very happy at this proof of your affection." "Now let us think of serious matters: I will make a package of linen, which I shall find in the commode, to take to him in prison; Bouvard, whom I shall send here to-morrow, will manage the rest. First however, I'll open the secretary and take out the papers and money which Germain begged me to keep for him." "But, while I think of it said Rodolphe, "Louise Morel gave me, yesterday, the 1300 francs in gold, which Germain had given her to pay the debt of her father, but which I had already done; I have this money; it belongs to Germain, since he has paid back the notary; I will give it to you; you add it to the rest."

"As you please, Rodolphe; yet, I would rather not have so large a sum with me at home, there are so many robbers now-a-days. Papers are very well—there is nothing to fear; but money—it is dangerous." "Perhaps you are right, my neighbour; shall I take charge of this sum? If Germain has need of any-

thing, you must let me know at once. I will leave you my address, and I will send you what he wants."

"I should not have dared to ask this service from you; it will be much better. I will give you also the money I shall receive from the sale of his effects. Let us see these papers," said the young girl, opening the secretary and several drawers. "Ah! it is probably this. Here is a large envelope. Ah! look here, Mr. Rodolphe." And she read in a faltering tone,—

"'In case I should die a violent death, or otherwise, I beg the person who should open this secretary to carry these papers to Mademoiselle Rigolette, sempstress, Rue du Temple.'

"Can I break the seal, Mr. Rodolphe?" "Doubtless; does he not say that among these papers there is one particularly addressed to you?" The young girl broke the seal. Several papers were enclosed; one of them, bearing the superscription, '*To Mademoiselle Rigolette*," contained these words: "When you read this letter, I shall no longer exist. If, as I fear, I shall die a violent death, in falling a victim to a wilful murder, some information, under the title of *Notes on my Life*, may give a clue to my assassins." "Ah! Mr. Rodolphe," said Rigolette, "I am no longer astonished that he was so sad. Poor Germain! always to be pursued by such ideas!"

"Yes; he must have been much afflicted. But his worst days are over, believe me." "Alas! I hope so, Mr. Rodolphe. But, however, to be in prison—accused of robbery." "Be comforted. Once his innocence is recognised, instead of falling into an isolated state, he will find friends. You, in the first place; then a beloved mother, from whom he has been separated since his childhood." "His mother! He has still a mother?" "Yes. She thinks him lost to her. Judge of her joy when she will see him again. Do not speak to him of his mother. I confide this secret to you, because you interest yourself so generously in his favour." "I thank you, Mr. Rodolphe; you may be assured I will keep your secret." And Rigolette continued the reading of his letter:—

"'If you will, Mademoiselle, look over these notes, you will see that I have been all my life very unhappy, except during the time I passed with you. That which I should never have dared to tell you, you will find written in a kind of *memento*, entitled "*My sole days of happiness.*"

" ' Almost every evening, on leaving you, I thus poured out the consoling thoughts that your affection inspired, and which alone tempered the bitterness of my life. That which was friendship when with you, became love when absent from you. I have concealed this until the moment when I shall be no more, for you than, perhaps, a sad remembrance. My destiny was so unhappy, that I should never have spoken to you of this sentiment; although sincere and profound, it would only have made you unhappy.

" One wish alone remains to be fulfilled, and I hope that you will accomplish it. I have seen with what admirable courage you work, and how much method and economy were necessary for you to live on the small amount you earn so industriously. Often, without telling you, I have trembled in thinking that a malady, caused perhaps, by excess of labour, might reduce you to a situation so frightful that I could not even think of it without alarm. It is very grateful for me to think that I can at least spare you the horrors, and, perhaps, in a great degree, the miseries which you, in the thoughtlessness of youth, happily do not foresee.

" What does he mean," said Rigolette, astonished. " Continue; we shall see."

" ' I know on how little you can live, and what a resource the smallest sum would be to you in a time of difficulty. I am very poor, but by economy, I have set aside 1500 francs, deposited at a banker's; it is all that I possess. By my will, which you will find here, I bequeath this to you; accept it from a friend, a good brother, who is no more.'

" Ah! Mr. Rodolphe," said Rigolette, bursting into tears, and giving the letter to the prince, " this gives me too much pain. Good Germain, thus to think of me! Ah, what an excellent heart!" " Worthy and good young man!" replied Rodolphe, with emotion. " But calm yourself, my child. Thank God, Germain is not dead; this anticipated, will at least serve as a witness of his love for you."

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" It is true. To be beloved by so good a young man, is very flattering, is it not, Rodolphe?"

" And some day, perhaps, you will participate in this love?"

" Oh, Rodolphe, it is very trying; this poor Germain is so much to be pitied. I'll put myself in his place—if, at the mo-

ment, when I thought myself abandoned, despised by all the world, a person, a good friend, came to me, still more kind than I could hope for—I should be so happy." After a moment's pause, Rigolette resumed, with a sigh, "On the other hand, we are both so poor, that, perhaps, it would not be reasonable. Look here, Rodolphe, I do not wish to think of that; perhaps I am mistaken; what is sure, is, that I will do all I can for Germain, as long as he remains in prison. Once free, it will always be time enough to see if it is love or friendship I feel for him; then if it is love—what would you, it will be love. But it grows late; will you collect these papers, while I make up a bundle of linen? Ah! I forget the bag enclosing the little orange cravat, which I have given him. It is in this drawer, without doubt. Oh! see how pretty it is, all embroidered! Poor Germain! he has guarded it like a relic! I well remember the last time I wore it, and when I gave it to him. He was so happy!"

At this moment some one knocked at the door.

"Who is there?" demanded Rodolphe.

"I want to speak to Madame Mathieu," answered a hoarse and husky voice, with an accent which denoted the speaker to be one of the lowest order. (Madame Mathieu was the diamond broker of whom we have spoken.)

This voice singularly accented, awakened some vague recollections in the mind of Rodolphe. Wishing to enlighten them, he went and opened the door. He found himself face to face with one of the frequenters of the tapis-franc of the Ogresse, whom he recognised at once, so fully and plainly was the stamp of crime, marked on this youthful and besotted face—it was *Barbillon*.

Barbillon the mock coachman of the hack, which had conveyed the Brigand and La Chouette to Bouqueval; Barbillon, the murderer of the husband of the milkwoman, who committed such an outrage on Marie at the farm of Arnouville.

Either this wretch had forgotten the features of Rodolphe, whom he had seen only once at the tapis-franc of the Ogresse, or the change of dress prevented him from recognising the conqueror of the Chourineur; he manifested no astonishment at his appearance. "What do you want?" said Rodolphe. "Here is a letter for Madame Mathieu. I must give it into her own hands," answered Barbillon.

"She does not live here: inquire opposite," said Rodolphe.

"Thank you, citizen; they told me it was the door to the left; I am mistaken." Rodolphe did not recollect the name of the diamond broker; he had therefore no motive to interest himself about the woman to whom Barbillon came as a messenger. Nevertheless although he was ignorant of the crimes of this bandit, his face had such a guilty look of perversity, that he remained on the threshold of the door, curious to see the person to whom Barbillon brought this letter. Hardly had Barbillon knocked at the opposite door when it was opened, and the broker, a tall woman of about fifty years of age, appeared holding a candle in her hand.

"Madame Mathieu?" said Barbillon.

"That's my name."

"Here is a letter; I want an answer," and Barbillon made a step in advance, as if to enter the room; but she made a motion to him not to advance, unsealed the letter, read it, and answered with a satisfied air, "I will go to-morrow at the same time as before. Give my compliments to this lady."

"Yes, my good lady. Don't forget the messenger."

"Go ask those who sent you; they are richer than I am; and she closed her door. Rodolphe re-entered Germain's room, seeing Barbillon rapidly descending the staircase.

The brigand met on the Boulevard a man of a villanous and ferocious appearance, who waited for him. Although several persons might have heard, but not understood him, Barbillon appeared so much pleased that he could not restrain from saying to his companion, "Come, drink some brandy, Nicolas; the old woman falls into the snare; she will come to La Chouette's; Mother Martial will help us to take her diamonds away by force, and afterwards we will carry the body off in your boat." "Let us make haste, then; I must be at Asnieres early; I am afraid my brother Martial will suspect something." And the bandits, after having held this conversation, directed their steps towards the Rue Saint Denis.

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A few moments after, Rigolette and Rodolphe left the abode of Germain, got into the carriage, and drove to the Rue du Temple. When the carriage stopped, and the porteress came to open the door, Rodolphe saw his faithful Murphy, who was waiting for him at the door of the alley.

The presence of the squire announced some great event, or, at least, something unexpected, for he alone knew where to find the prince.

"What is the matter?" said Rodolphe, quickly, while Rigolette collected the papers in the vehicle.

"A great misfortune, my lord."

"Speak, for heaven's sake!"

"The Marquis d'Harville—" "You alarm me!"

"He gave a breakfast this morning to several of his friends. Everything was going off well; he, above all, had never been more gay, when a fatal imprudence—" "Go on, go on!"

"In playing with a pistol which he did not know was loaded—"

"He has wounded himself."

"Well?" something very terrible!"

"What do you say?" "He is dead!"

"D'Harville!" ah, it is frightful!" cried Rodolphe, in such a heard-rending tone, that Rigolette, who had just descended from the carriage with her bundles, said,—

"My God! what is the matter, Rodolphe?"

"Some very bad news that I have just told my friend," said Murphy to the young girl, for the prince was so much affected that he could not answer.

"Is it, then, some great misfortune?" asked Rigolette, tremblingly. "A very great misfortune," answered the squire.

"Ah! this is frightful!" said Rodolphe, after a silence of some moments; then, recollecting Rigolette, he said to her, "Pardon me, my child, if I do not go with you to your room; to-morrow I will send you my address and a permit to go to Germain's prison. I will soon see you again."

"Ah! Mr. Rodolphe, I assure you I am very sorry for the bad news you have heard. I thank you for having accompanied me to-night. Adieu."

The prince and Murphy got into the carriage, which took them to the Rue Plumet.

Immediately, Rodolphe wrote to Clemence the following note:—

"MADAME,

"I learn this moment the unexpected blow which has overwhelmed you, and which takes from me one of my best friends: I shall not endeavour to describe my sorrow.

"Yet I must inform you of things foreign to this cruel event. I have just learned that your stepmother, who has been for some days in Paris, without doubt, leaves to-night for Normandy, taking with her Polidori. This will tell you of the dangers your father is threatened with, and allow me to give you some advice. After the frightful affair of this morning, your desire to leave Paris will be nothing extraordinary. Thus believe me, set off at once for Aubiers, to arrive there, if not before, at least as soon as your stepmother. Be assured, madame, far or near, I shall still watch over you; the abominable projects of your stepmother shall be baffled.

"Adieu, madame; I write this in haste. My heart is almost broken when I think of last evening; when I left him, more tranquil, more happy than he had been for a long time.

"Believe, madame, my profound devotion.

"RODOLPHE."

Following this advice, Madame d'Harville, three hours after the receipt of this letter, was on the road to Normandy. A post-chaise, which left the hotel of Rodolphe, followed the same route.

Unfortunately, from the trouble into which she was plunged by this complication of events, and the precipitation of her departure, Clemence forgot to acquaint the prince that she had met Fleur de Marie at Saint Lazare.

It will be remembered, perhaps, that the evening previous, La Chouette had threatened Madame Seraphin to disclose the fact of the existence of La Goualeuse, affirming that she knew (and she told the truth) where the young girl then was. It will also be remembered that after this conversation, Jacques Ferrand, fearing the revelation of his criminal misdeeds, had determined that it was for his interest to put the Goualeuse out of the way, whose existence, once known, might compromise him dangerously. He had, therefore, caused to be written to Bradamanté a note, to to summon him to come and hatch some new schemes, of which Fleur de Marie was to be the victim.

Bradamanté, occupied with the interests, not less pressing, of the step-mother of Madame d'Harville, who had her own reasons for conducting the quack to the bedside of M. d'Orbigny, doubtless, finding it more to his advantage to serve his old friend, paid no attention to the invitation of the notary, and set out for Normandy without seeing Madame Seraphin.

The storm gathered around Jacques Ferrand; in the course of the day, La Chouette had returned to reiterate her threats, and, to prove that they were not in vain, she had declared to the notary that the little girl, formerly abandoned by Madame Seraphin, was then a prisoner at Saint Lazare, under the name of La Goualeuse, and that if they did not give her 10,000 francs in three days, this young girl should receive some papers which would inform her that she had been in her infancy confided to the care of Jacques Ferrand.

According to his custom, the notary denied all this with audacity, and drove off La Chouette as an impudent liar, although he was convinced and frightened by her threats.

In the course of the day the notary found means to assure himself that the Goualeuse was a prisoner at Saint Lazare, and so noted for her good conduct, that her release was expected from one moment to another.

Furnished with this information, Jacques Ferrand, having arranged a most diabolical scheme, felt that, to execute it, the assistance of Bradamanté was more and more indispensable; hence the frequent attempts of Madame Seraphin to see the quack. Learning the same evening of his departure, forced to act by the imminence of his fears and danger, he remembered the Martial family, those fresh-water pirates established near the bridge of Asnieres, to whom Bradamanté had proposed to send Louise Morel, in order to get rid of her with impunity.

Having absolutely need of an accomplice to carry out his wicked designs against Fleur de Marie, the notary took every precaution in case a new crime should be committed, and the next morning, after the departure of Bradamanté for Normandy, Madame Seraphin went in great haste to see the Martials.

THE MYSTERIES OF PARIS.

PART VI.

CHAPTER I.

THE ISLAND OF THE RAVAGEUR.

THE following scenes took place on the evening of the day that Madame Seraphin had, according to the orders of the notary, paid a visit to the Martials, fresh-water pirates, established on the point of a small island, not far from the bridge of Asnieres. Martial, the father, who had died on the scaffold like his own father, left a widow, four sons, and two daughters. The second of these sons was already condemned to the galleys for life. Of this numerous family, there remained on the island of the ravageur, the mother: three sons; the eldest, the lover of La Louve, was twenty-five, the other twenty, the youngest twelve: two daughters; the one eighteen, the second nine. The instances of such families, where is perpetuated a kind of frightful inheritance in crime, are but too frequent. This must be so, because society thinks only of punishing, never of preventing the evil.

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Martial, first inhabitant of the island, being a *ravageur*, the people on the banks of the river called it the island of the Ravageur.

The dwelling of the river pirates is situated at the south end of the isle. On a sign which hangs near the door can be seen :—

"AUX RENDEZVOUS DES RAVAGEURS."

To his other business the head of this family had added that of an innkeeper, fisherman, and the keeping of boats for hire. The widow of this executed criminal continued to keep the house Vagabonds, wandering quacks, and itinerant keepers of animals came to pass Sundays and other non-working days in parties of pleasure.

Martial (the lover of La Louve), the eldest son of the family,

the least vicious of all, fished by stealth, and, when occasion required, took the part of the weak against the strong.

One of his other brothers, Nicolas, the future accomplice of Barbillon in the murder of the diamond broker, was apparently a ravageur, but, in fact, a fresh-water pirate on the Seine and its banks. Finally, François, the youngest son, took care of those who wished to go boating. The eldest girl, surnamed Calebasse, assisted her mother in the kitchen and to wait upon the guests; her sister Amandine, aged nine years, gave what aid she could to Calebasse and her mother.

On this night, thick and heavy clouds, driven by the winds, obscured the sky; hardly a star could be seen through the increasing gloom. The house, with its irregular gables, was completely buried in darkness, except the two windows on the ground floor, from which streamed a red light, which was reflected like two long trains of fire on the troubled waters near the landing place, which was close to the house. The chains of the boat moored there, mingled its rattlings with the mournful sighings of the wind through the poplars, and the heavy splashing of the water on the the shore. A part of the family were assembled in the kitchen of the house, a large and low room ; opposite the door were two windows, under which was a large furnace ; on the left, a high fireplace ; to the right, a staircase which led to the upper story; at the side of this, the entrance to a large room, furnished with several tables, destined for the guests of the inn. The light of a lamp, joined to the flames of the hearth, shone on a number of saucepans, and other cooking utensils of copper, hung on the walls, or arranged on shelves with various kinds of crockery ; a large table stood in the centre of this kitchen. The widow was seated at the fire with her three children. This woman, tall and thin, appeared to be about forty-five years of age. She was dressed in black ; a mourning kerchief, tied round her head, concealed her hair, and almost covered her pale and wrinkled forehead; her nose was long, straight, and pointed ; her cheek bones prominent, and cheeks fallen in; her yellow, sickly-looking skin was deeply marked with the small-pox; the corners of her mouth always drawn down, rendered still harsher the expression of this cold, stern, sinister-looking face, immovable as a mask of marble. Her dull, blue eyes were surmounted by grey eyebrows. She and her two daughters were occupied with some sewing.

The eldest resembled her mother—the same cold, calm, and wicked look; her thin nose, her mouth, her pale visage. Only her earthy skin, yellow as saffron, gave her the nickname of Calebasse. She wore no mourning: her dress was brown; her black lace cap displayed two bands of uncommon hair, light flaxen, with no lustre. François, the youngest son, was seated on a bench mending an *aldret*, a very destructive sort of fishing net, strictly forbidden to be used on the Seine. Notwithstanding his sunburnt appearance, the skin of this child was fair; a forest of red hair covered his head; his features were well turned, his lips thick, his forehead projecting, his eyes sharp and piercing: there was no resemblance to his mother nor his eldest sister. His expression was timid and cunning; from time to time, through the kind of mane which fell over his face, he cast obliquely on his mother a look of defiance, or exchanged with his sister Amandine a glance of intelligence and affection.

She, seated at the side of her brother, was occupied, not in marking, but in *unmarking* some linen stolen the night previous. She was nine years old, and resembled her brother as her sister did her mother; her features, without being any more regular, were less coarse than those of François; although covered with freckles, her skin was of dazzling purity; her lips were thick, but vermilion; her hair red, but fine, silky, and brilliant; her eyes small, but soft and expressive.

When they exchanged looks, Amandine pointed to the door; at this sign François answered by a sigh; then, calling the attention of his sister by a rapid gesture, he counted distinctly from the end of his netting-needle ten threads of the net. This meant, in their symbolical language, that their brother Martial would not return before ten o'clock.

Calebasse perceiving that Amandine had ceased a moment from work, said to her, in a harsh voice,

"Will you soon have done with that chemise?"

The child held down her head without replying; with her fingers and scissors, she quickly finished picking out the marks made with red cotton, and then, handing the work to her mother, said, timidly—

"Mamma, I have finished it." Without making any reply, the widow threw her another piece of linen. The child could not catch it in time, and let it fall. Her sister gave her,

with her iron hand, a heavy blow on the arm, saying, "Little stupid fool!" Amandine resumed her work after having exchanged a hasty glance with her brother; a tear glistened in her eye. The same silence continued to reign in the kitchen. The wind howled without, and the sign creaked mournfully on its hinges. The two children observed, with secret alarm, that their mother did not speak. Although she was habitually very quiet, this complete taciturnity and certain contractions of her lips announced that the widow was, in what they called, her *white rage*, that is to say, a prey to some concentrated irritation.

The fire appeared to be going out from the want of fuel.

"François, a stick of wood," said Calebasse. The young mender of unlawful nets looked behind the chimney-piece, and answered, "There is no more there."

"Go to the wood-pile," said Calebasse.

François murmured some unintelligible words, but did not stir.

"Ah, François, did you hear me?" said Calebasse, sharply. The widow placed on her knees a napkin, which she was also unmarking, and looked at her son.

He had his head down, but he thought he felt the terrible look of his mother upon him. Fearing to meet this formidable face, the child remained immovable.

"Ah, now are you deaf, François!" resumed Calebasse, much irritated. "Mother; you see."

Amandine, without being perceived, pushed gently the arm of her brother, to urge him tacitly to obey Calebasse. François did not stir. The eldest sister looked at her mother, as if to demand the punishment of the offender. The widow understood her; pointed with her long, bony finger to a long willow switch, which stood in the corner.

Calebasse leaned back, took this instrument of correction, and handed it to her mother.

François had perfectly understood the gesture of his mother; he jumped up quickly, and with one bound was out of his mother's reach. "You wish, then, that mother should beat you soundly?" cried Calebasse.

The widow, holding the rod in her hand, bit her lips, and looked at François with a steady eye without pronouncing a word. From the slight agitation of Amandine's hands, who sat with her head down, while her neck was suffused with red,

it could be seen that the child, although accustomed to such scenes, was alarmed at the fate which awaited her brother, who, having taken refuge in a corner of the kitchen, seemed alarmed and irritated.

"Take care of yourself; mother will get up, and then it will be too late," said Calebasse.

"All the same to me," answered François, turning pale. "I prefer to be beaten as I was yesterday, than go to the wood-pile at night." "And why?" said Calebasse, impatiently.

"I am afraid of the wood-pile, I am," answered François, shuddering in spite of himself.

"You are afraid, fool! and of what?"

François hung down his head without answering.

"Will you speak? What are you afraid of?"

"I don't know; but I'm afraid."

"You have been there a hundred times, and even last night."

"I don't want to go there any more."

"There's mother! she's getting up."

"So much the worse," cried the child. "Let her beat me; let her kill me; I will not go to the wood-pile—at night, above all."

"But, once more, I ask you, why not?" said Calebasse.

"Well, because—" "Because what?"

"Because there's some one—" "Some one?"

"Buried there," murmured the trembling boy.

The widow, notwithstanding her impassibility, could not repress a slight shudder; her daughter imitated her; one would have said that these two women had received an electric shock.

"There's some one buried in the wood-house?" said Calebasse, shrugging up her shoulders.

"Yes," said François, in a voice so low that he could hardly be heard. "Liar!" cried Calebasse.

"I tell you that, not long ago, in piling the wood, I saw, in a dark corner of the wood-house, a dead man's bones; they stuck out of the ground, which was damp round about," replied François.

"Do you hear him, mother? Is he not a fool?" said Calebasse, making a significant sign to the widow. "They are some mutton bones I threw there."

"They are not mutton bones," answered the child; "they are bones buried—dead man's bones; a foot which stuck out of the ground. I saw it."

"And you told this to your brother; to your good friend Martial, did you not?" said Calebasse. François did not answer.

"Wicked little spy," cried Calebasse, furiously; "because he is as cowardly as a cow; he will be capable to have us guillotined, as our father was."

"Since you call me a spy," cried François, exasperated, "I shall tell every thing to Martial. I have not told him yet, for I have not seen him since; but when he returns to-night, I—"

The child dared not finish. His mother advanced towards him, calm but inexorable.

Although she habitually held herself much bent over, her size was very large for a woman; holding the switch in one hand, with the other the widow took her son by the arm, and, in spite of the alarm, the resistance, the prayers, the tears of the poor child, dragging him after her, she compelled him to mount the stairs. In a moment was heard the sound of heavy blows, mingled with cries and sobs. When this noise ceased a door was shut violently, and the widow descended. She placed the whip in its place, seated herself alongside of the fire, and resumed her work without saying a word.

CHAPTER II.

THE RIVER PIRATES.

After a few moments' silence, the widow said to her daughter, "Go and get some wood; we will *arrange* the woodhouse to-night, at the return of Nicolas and Martial." "Martial? You will also, then, tell him that?" "Some wood!" repeated the widow, interrupting her daughter. She, accustomed to this iron will, lighted a lantern and went out. At the moment she opened the door, it could be seen that the night was very dark, and one could hear the whistling of the wind through the poplars, the clanging of the chains which held the boats, the waving of the river. These noises were profoundly sad.

During the preceding scene, Amandine, painfully affected at the fate of François, whom she loved tenderly, had dared neither to raise her eyes, nor wipe her tears, which fell drop by drop on her knees. The tears obscured her sight. In her haste to finish the work which was given her, she had cut her hand with the scissors; the blood flowed freely, but the poor child thought less of the pain than the punishment which she might expect for having stained this linen with her blood. Happily, the widow, absorbed in profound thought, perceived nothing. Calebasse returned, bringing a basket filled with wood. At a look from her mother, she answered by a sign in the affirmative. This was intended to say that the dead man's foot did appear above the earth.

The widow bit her lips, and continued to work, only she appeared to handle the needle more quickly. Calebasse replenished the fire, and resumed her seat alongside of her mother.

"Nicolas does not come," said she; I hope that the old woman who was here this morning, in giving him a rendezvous with a citizen, on the part of Bradamanté, has not got him into some bad scrape. She had such an air! she would not explain, nor tell her name, nor where she came from."

The widow shrugged up her shoulders.

"You think there is no danger for Nicolas, mother? after all, perhaps you are right." "The old woman said he must be on the 'Quai de Billy, at seven o'clock in the evening, opposite the dock, and that he would find a man there who wished to speak to him, and who would say Bradamanté for pass-word. Really, that does not seem so very dangerous. If Nicolas is late, it is, perhaps, because he has found something on the route, as he did yesterday; this linen, which he has stolen from a washing-boat," and she shewed one of the pieces of linen, which Amandine was unmarking. "And when one knows how to steal like Nicolas, there is always something to gain the linen he stole yesterday has only cost us the trouble of picking out the marks: is it not so, mother?" said Calebasse. The widow bowed her head.

After a moment's pause, she said to her daughter, "You think there is something to be done with the old man who lives in the doctor's house?" "Yes, mother." "He looks like a beggar." "That does'nt prevent his being a noble." "A noble?" "Yes; and that he should have gold in his purse, although he goes to

Paris on foot every day, and returns in the same manner, with his heavy stick for his carriage." "How do you know that there is gold?" "The other day I was at the post-office, to see if there were any letters from Toulon." At these words, which brought to her mind her son at the galleys, the widow knit her brows, and suppressed a sigh. Calebasse continued: "I awaited my turn, when the old man we speak of came in. I knew him at once by his beard, as white as his hair, and his black-eyebrows. In spite of his age, he must be a determined old man; he said, 'Have you any letters from Angiers, for the Curate of Saint Demy?' 'Yes,' was the answer, 'here is one.' 'It is for me,' said he; 'here is my passport.' While the postmaster examined it, the old man drew out his purse to pay the postage. At one end I saw the gold glittering through the meshes, at least forty or fifty Louis!" cried Calebasse, her eyes twinkling, "and yet he is dressed like a beggar. It is one of these old misers stuffed with gold. Come, mother; we know his name; it may serve us to get into the house when Amandine finds out if he has any servants."

A violent barking of the dogs interrupted Calebasse. "Ah! the dogs bark," said she; "they hear a boat. It is either Martial or Nicolas."

"After a few moments the door opened, and Nicolas Martial, the future accomplice of Barbillon, made his appearance. The face of Nicolas was at once ignoble and ferocious; small, thin, pitiful, it could hardly be imagined that he followed so dangerous a calling; but an indomitable energy supplied the place of the physical strength which was wanting. He wore a kind of great coat, without sleeves, made of goat-skin covered with long hair. On entering, he threw on the ground a pig of copper which he had on his shoulder. "Good-night, and good booty, mother!" cried he, in a cracked voice; "there are three more pigs in my boat, a bundle of clothes, and a box filled with I don't know what for I have not amused myself by opening it." "And what about the man at the Quai de Billy?" asked Calebasse, while the widow looked at her son without saying a word. He, for sole answer, put his hand in his pocket, and jingled together a number of pieces of silver.

"You took all that from him?" cried Calebasse.

"No, he shelled out himself two hundred francs, and he will shell out eight hundred more when I shall have—but enough; let us

unload the boat; we can talk afterwards. Isn't Martial here?" "No," said his sister. "So much the better; we will lock up the booty without him; just as well he shouldn't know."

"You are afraid of him, coward!" said Calebasse, crossly.

"Afraid of him? me!" He shrugged up his shoulders. "I am afraid he'll sell us, that's all. As to the fear, my knife has too sharp a tongue!" "Oh! when he is not here, you brag; let him but come, that shuts your bill." Nicolas appeared insensible to this reproach, and said, "Come, quick, quick! to the boat. Where then, is François, mother? he could help us."

"Mother has shut him up stairs, after having beat him nicely; he will go to bed without supper," said Calebasse.

"Good! but let him come and help us unload the boat, all the same; hey, mother? Calebasse, he, and I, in a twist, will have all housed." The widow pointed towards the ceiling. Calebasse understood, and went to look for François.

The gloomy visage of the mother had become slightly relaxed since the arrival of Nicolas; she liked him better than Calebasse, but not so well as she did her Toulon son, for the maternal love of this ferocious creature increased in proportion to the criminality of her offspring. This perverse preference sufficiently explains the dislike of the widow to her youngest children, who displayed no bad tendencies, and her profound hatred for Martial, her eldest son, who, without leading a blameless life, might have past for a a very honest man, if he had been compared to Nicolas, Calebasse, or his brother, the galley-slave. "Where have you been plundering to-night," asked the widow. "On returning from the Quai de Billy, I cast a sheep's eye upon a galley fastened to the quay, near the bridge of the Invalides. It was dark; I said, no light in the cabin—the sailors are on shore—I'll go on board; if I meet any one, I'll ask for a piece of twine to mend my oar. I went into the cabin—nobody; then I took what I could, some clothes, a large box, and, on the deck, four pigs of copper; for I returned twice: the galley was loaded with copper and iron. But here come François and Calebasse: quick to the boat! Come, be moving, you too, eh! Amandine. You can carry the clothes."

Left alone, the widow busied herself in preparing the supper for the family, placing on the table glasses, bottles, plates, and silver forks and spoons. Just as she finished her preparation, her children returned heavily laden. The weight of the two pigs, which

he carried on his shoulders, seemed almost to crush François. Amandine was hardly visible under the bundle of clothes which she carried on her head. Nicolas and Calebasse carried between them a box of white wood, on the top of which was placed the fourth pig of copper. "The box, the box!" cried Calebasse, with impatience; "let us air the case."

The copper was thrown on the ground. Nicolas, armed with a hatchet, endeavoured to get it under the cover, so as to force it. The red and flickering light from the hearth illuminated this scene of pillage; without, the wind howled with renewed violence. Nicolas, kneeling before the box, tried to break it, and uttered the most horrible oaths on seeing his efforts were useless. Calebasse, her eyes glistening with cupidity, her cheeks flushed, kneeled on the box, and assisted Nicolas with all her strength. The widow, separated from the group by the table, where she stood at full length also had her eager gaze fixed on the stolen object.

"Ah!" cried the family in a joyful tone. And all, from the mother to the little girl, crowded, around the stolen case. Sent, without doubt, by some Paris merchant to some of his country customers, it contained a large quantity of articles for women's use.

After the departure of the children, Nicolas and his sister hid the stolen articles in a little cellar under the kitchen.

"Ah mother! some drink, and let it be choice," cried the bandit "I have well earned my day. Serve the supper Calebasse; Martial shall gnaw our bones: good for him. Now let us talk of the citizen of the Quai de Billy,' for to-morrow or the next day that must come off, if I wish to pocket the money which he promised. I am going to tell you this mother: but some drink. It is I who treats."

And Nicolas rattled the money which he had in his pocket anew; then, throwing off his goatskin jacket and his black woollen cap, he seated himself at the table before a large ragout of mutton, a piece of cold veal, and a salad.

When Calebasse had brought some wine and brandy, the widow seated herself at the table, having Nicolas on her right and Calebasse on her left; opposite were the unoccupied places of Marital and the two children. The bandit drew from his pocket a long and broad catalan knife, with a horn handle and sharp blade. Looking at this murderous weapon with a kind of ferocious satis-

faction, he said to the widow, "This still cuts well! Pass me the bread, mother!" "Speaking of knives," said Calebasse, "François saw something in the wood-house." "What?" said Nicolas not understanding her. "He saw one of the feet—" "Of the man?" cried Nicolas. "Yes," said the widow, putting a slice of meat on the plate of her son. "That's droll; the hole was very deep," said the brigand; but since that time it should have been heaped up." "We must throw everything into the river to-night," said the widow. "It is more sure," answered Nicolas.

"We can tie a stone to it with a piece of old chain," added Calebasse. "Not so foolish," said Nicolas, pouring out a glass; "come drink with us, mother; it will make you more lively." The widow shook her head, drew back her glass, and said to her son, "And the man at the Quai de Billy?"

"This is it," said Nicolas, continuing to eat and drink. "On arriving at the wharf, I tied my boat, and mounted on the quay; seven o'clock struck at the military bakehouse of Chaillot—could hardly see your hand before your face. I walked up and down for about fifteen minutes, when I heard some one walk quickly behind me; I stopped; a man wrapped in a cloak approached, coughing; he halted. All that I know of his face is, that his cloak hid his nose, and his hat covered his eyes." (This mysterious personage was Jacques Ferrand, who, wishing to make away with Fleur de Marie, had that morning despatched Madame Seraphin to the Martials, whom he hoped to make his instruments in this new crime.) "'Bradamanté,' said the citizen, this was the pass-word agreed upon with the old woman. 'Ravageur,' I replied.

"'Is your name Martial?' said he to me.

"'Yes, citizen.' 'A woman came to your Island this morning; what did she say?' 'That you had something to say on the part of Mr. Bradamanté.' 'Do you wish to gain some money?' 'Yes, citizen—much.'

'"Have you a boat?' 'We have four, it is our business; boatmen and ravageurs from father to son, at your service.' 'This is what is to be done, if you are not afraid.' 'Afraid—of what?' 'To see some one *drowned by accident;* only it is necessary to assist the *accident.* Do you comprehend?' 'Oh! yes; you want to make an individual drink some of the Seine by chance! that suits me; but, as it is rather a delicate fry, the seasoning

will cost rather dear.' 'How much for two?' 'For two! will there be two persons to make soup of in the river?' 'Yes.'

'"Five hundred francs a head, citizen, and its not dear!' 'Agreed for a thousand francs.' 'Pay in advance, citizen?' 'Two hundred in advance, the remainder afterwards.'

"'You are afraid to trust me?' 'No; you can pocket my two hundred francs without fulfilling our agreement.' 'And you, the affair once finished, when I ask you for the remainder, you can answer me, go to the devil.'

'"You must run your chance; does this suit you, yes or no? two hundred francs down, and the night after to-morrow, here, at nine o'clock, I will give you eight hundred francs.' 'And who shall tell you that I have made these two persons drink?'

'"I shall know it, that's my affair; is it a bargain!'

'"It is.' 'Here's your money. Now listen to me: you will know the old woman again who came to see you this morning?' 'Yes, citizen.' 'To-morrow, or the day after at farthest, you will see her arrive towards four o'clock in the afternoon, on the shore opposite your island with a young girl: the old woman will make you a signal by waving her handkerchief.' 'Yes.' 'How long does it take to go from the shore to your island?' 'Twenty good minutes.' 'Your boats have flat bottoms?' 'Flat as your hand.' 'You must make adroitly a kind of a large bung hole in the bottom of one of your boats, so as to be able, by opening this hole, to make it sink in a twinkling; do you comprehend?' 'Very well; you are the devil! I have exactly an old boat that I was about to break up; it will just answer for this last voyage.'

'"You set out, then, from your island with this boat; a good boat follows you, conducted by some one of your family. You land; you take the old woman, and the young girl on board your boat, and you set off for the island; but, at a reasonable distance from the shore, you feign to stoop to fix something; you open the bung hole, and jump lightly into the other boat, while the old woman and the young girl—' 'Drink out of the same cup—that's it—hey, citizen?' 'But are you sure of not being disturbed?' 'If there should be any guests at your tavern?' 'No fear; at this time, and in winter above all, no one comes; it is our dead season; and if any one should come, they would not be in the way; on the contrary—all tried friends.' 'Very well! Besides, you will not be at all compromised; the boat will sink through age,

and the old woman with it. In short, to be well assured that both of them are drowned (remember, by accident), you should, if they appear again, or if they cling to the boat, appear to do all in your power to assist them, and—' 'Aid them—to dive again! Good!' 'It is better that the execution take place after sunset, so that it be dark when they fall into the water.' 'No, for if one cannot see clear, how can they know whether the two women have drunk their fill, or want some more?' 'That is true; then the accident must happen before dark.' 'Very good; but does the old woman suspect anything?' 'No. On arriving, she will whisper in your ear, *We must drown the girl; a short time before you sink the boat, make me a sign, so that I can escape with you.* You must answer in such a manner as to calm any suspicions.' 'So that she thinks to lead the little blonde to drink!' 'And she will drink with her.' 'It is wisely arranged.' 'And, above all, let the old woman suspect nothing.' 'Be easy, she shall swallow it like honey.' 'Well good luck, my boy! If I am pleased, perhaps I shall employ you again.' 'At your service, citizen.' "Thereupon," said the brigand, ending his story, "I left the man in the cloak, got into my boat, and, passing by the galley, I picked up the booty you have seen."

It will be seen from the recital of Nicolas, that the notary wished, by means of a double crime, to get rid of Fleur de Marie and of Madame Seraphin at the same time, by making the latter fall into the snare she believed only set for Fleur de Marie. And as to Madame Seraphin, in sacrificing her he silenced one of his accomplices (Bradamanté was the other), who could at any time ruin him by ruining themselves, it is true; but Jacques Ferrand thought his secrets better guarded by the tomb than by personal interest. The widow and Calebasse had attentively listened to Nicolas, who had only interrupted himself to drink to excess. For this reason he began to talk with singular warmth. "That's not all; I have managed another affair with La Chouette and Barbillon, of the Rue aux Fêves. It is a famous affair, knowingly got up, and if we don't fail, there will be something to fry, I tell you. It is in contemplation to rob a diamond broker, who has sometimes as much as 50,000 francs value in her box." "Fifty thousand francs!" cried the mother and daughter, their eyes sparkling with cupidity. "Yes, that's all! Bras-Rouge is of the party. Yesterday he decoyed the broker by a letter which Bar-

billon and I took to her on the Boulevard Saint Denis. Bras-Rouge is a famous fellow! As there is something to be gained, we do not suspect him. To make her bite, he already sold her a diamond for 400 francs. She will not fail to come at dusk, to his tavern in the Champs Elysées. We will be there concealed. Calebasse shall come also: she will take care of my boat. If it is necessary to pack up the broker, dead or alive, this will be a nice carriage, and leave no traces behind. There's a plan for you!"

"I am always suspicious of Bras-Rouge," said the widow. "After the affair of the Rue Montmartre, your brother Ambrose was sent to Toulon, and Bras-Rouge was released.

"Because there were no proofs against him, he is so cunning! But to betray others—never!" The widow shook her head, as if she had been only half convinced of the probity of Bras-Rouge. "I prefer," said she, "the affair of the Quai de Billy—the ducking of the two women. But Martial will be in the way, as he always is." "The devil's thunder will not rid us of him, then!" cried Nicolas, half drunk, sticking his long knife with fury into the table. "I told mother that we had had enough of him; that it could not last," said Calebasse; "as long as he is here, we can make nothing out of the children." "I tell you he is capable of denouncing us from one day to another," said Nicolas. "Do you see, mother; if you'd have believed," added he, in a ferocious manner, looking at the widow, "all would have been said." "There are other means." "This is the best." "At present, no," answered the widow, with a tone so absolute that Nicolas was quiet, ruled by the influence of his mother. She added: to-morrow morning he shall leave the island for ever." "How?" said Calebasse and Nicolas in a breath. "He will soon come in; seek a quarrel—boldly—as you have never dared to do. Come to blows, if need be. He is strong, but you will be two, and I will help you. Above all, no knives—no blood; let him be beaten, not wounded." "And what then?" asked Nicolas. "We'll have an explanation; we'll tell him to leave the island to-morrow, otherwise we'll repeat this again to-morrow night; these continual quarrels will disgust him. I know it; we have let him be too quiet." "But he is stubborn as a mule; he'll just remain on account of the children," said Calebasse. "Yes," said the widow; "but every day; it will be hell; he will give up." "And if he

will not?" "Then I have another plan to force him to leave to night, or to-morrow morning at latest," answered the widow, with a strange smile. "Truly, mother?" "Yes; but I would rather frighten him by quarrelling and fighting; if I do not then succeed, I'll try the other way." "And if the other way don't answer, mother?" said Nicolas. "There is still another, which always does," replied the widow. Suddenly the door opened and Martial entered. It blew so hard outside that they had not heard the barking of the dogs announcing the arrival of the eldest son of the widow.

CHAPTER III.

MOTHER AND SON.

IGNORANT of the evil designs of his family, Martial entered slowly into the kitchen. Some words of La Louve, in her conversation with Fleur de Marie, have already informed us of the singular life of this man. Endowed with good natural instinct, incapable of an action positively bad or wicked, Martial did not conduct himself as he should have done. He fished contrary to law, and his strength, his audacity, inspired so much terror in the guardians of the fisheries, that they shut their eyes on his proceedings.

The lover of La Louve resembled François and Amandine very much; he was of middling stature, but robust and with broad shoulders; his thick, red hair, cut short, laid in points on his open forehead; his thick, heavy beard, his large cheeks, his square nose, his blue and bold eyes, gave to him a singularly resolute expression.

He wore an old waxed hat; and, notwithstanding the cold, he had nothing on but a wretched blouse over his well-worn vest and pantaloons of coarse velveteen. He held in his hand an enormous knotty stick, which he placed alongside of him on the table.

A fat terrier dog, with crooked legs, came in with Martial; but he remained near the door, not daring to approach the fire, nor the people at the table; experience had proved to old *Mirant*, that he was, as well as his master, not in very good odour with the family. "Where are the children?" Such were the first words of Martial when he took his seat at the table.

"They are where they are," answered Calebasse, sharply.

"Where are the children, mother?" repeated Martial, without paying any attention to his sister. "They are gone to bed," answered the widow, drily. "Have they supped, mother?" "What's that to you?" cried Nicolas, brutally, after having swallowed a large glass of wine, to augment his audacity.

Martial, as indifferent to the attacks of Nicolas as he was to those of Calebasse, said again to his mother,—

"I am sorry the children have already gone to bed."

"So much the worse," replied the widow.

"Yes, so much the worse; for I like to have them alongside of me when I sup."

"And we, as they trouble us, we sent them off," cried Nicolas, "if it don't please you, go and look for them!"

Martial, much surprised, looked fixedly at his brother. Then, as if reflecting on the folly of a quarrel, he shrugged up his shoulders, cut a piece of bread with his knife, and helped himself to a slice of meat. The terrier had drawn near to Nicolas, although still at a very respectful distance; the bandit, irritated at the contemptuous indifference of his brother, and hoping to make him lose his patience, by striking the dog, gave Mirant a furious kick, which made him howl piteously. Martial became purple, pressed in his contracted hands the knife which he held, and struck violently on the table; but, still containing himself, he called his dog, and said gently, "Here, Mirant."

The terrier came and laid down at his master's feet. This moderation defeated the projects of Nicolas; he wished to push his brother to extremities, to bring about a rupture. So he added, "I won't have your dog here!" For answer, Martial poured out a glass of wine, and drank it slowly.

Exchanging a rapid glance with Nicolas, the widow encouraged him by a sign to continue his hostilities, hoping that a violent quarrel would bring about a rupture and complete separation.

Nicolas went and took the willow switch which stood in the corner, and, approaching the terrier, he struck him, crying, "Go out from this, Mirant!" Up to this time, Nicolas had often shown his animosity towards Martial, but never before had he dared to provoke him with so much audacity and perseverance. At the cry from his dog, Martial arose, opened the door of the kitchen, put the terrier outside, and returned to continue his supper. This incredible patience, so little in harmony with the

ordinary character of Martial, confounded his aggressors. They looked at each other, very much surprised. He, appearing completely a stranger to what was passing, ate heartily, and kept a profound silence. "Calebasse, take away the wine," said the widow to her daughter. She hastened to obey, when Martial said, "Stop! I have not finished my supper." "So much the worse!" said the widow, taking away the bottle. "Ah! that's different!" answered he, and pouring out a large glass of water, he drank it, and smacking his lips, he cried, "That's famous water!" This imperturbable 'sang-froid' still more irritated Nicolas, already much excited by his frequent libations; nevertheless, he recoiled before a direct attack, knowing the superior strength of his brother; suddenly he cried,—

"You have done well to knock under with your dog, Martial: it is a good habit to get into; for you must expect to see La Louve kicked out, just as we have kicked out your dog."

"Oh! yes; for if she has the misfortune to come to the island when she comes out of prison," said Calebasse, comprehending the intention of Nicolas, "I it is who will box her soundly."

"And I'll give her a ducking in the mud, near the hovel at the other end of the island," added Nicolas; and if she comes up again, I'll put her under again, with blows from my shoe—the hussey." This insult, addressed to La Louve, whom he loved with unqualified passion, triumphed over the pacific resolutions of Martial; he knit his brows, his blood rushed to his face, the veins on his forehead and neck swelled like ropes; yet he still had command over himself to say to Nicolas, in a voice altered by suppressed rage, "Take care of yourself; you seek a quarrel, and you will find a turn which you do not look for." "A turn—to me?" "Yes, better than the last." "How? Nicolas," said Calebasse, with well-feigned attachment. "has Martial beat you? I say, Mother, do you hear? I am no more astonished that Nicolas is afraid of him." "He whipped me because he took me unawares," said Nicolas, becoming pale with rage.

"You lie; you attacked me slily, I kicked you, and I took pity on you; but if you undertake to speak again of La Louve, understand well, then I'll have no mercy; you shall have my marks for a long time."

"And if I wish to speak of La Louve?" said Calebasse, "I will give you a couple of boxes to warm you; and if you go on,

I'll go on to warm you." "And if I speak of her?" said the widow, slowly. "You?" "Yes, me." "You?" said Martial, making a violent effort to contain himself; "you?" "You will beat me, also; is it not so?"

"No; bnt if you speak of La Louve, I'll thrash Nicolas; now, go on; it is your affair, and his also."

"You," cried the enraged bandit, raising his dangerous knife; "You thrash me!" "Nicolas, no knife," cried the widow, endeavouring to seize the arm of her son; but he, drunk with wine and anger, pushed his mother rudely on one side, and rushed at his brother. Martial fell back quickly, seized his heavy knotted stick, and put himself on the defensive. "Nicolas, no knife!" repeated the widow. "Let him alone!" cried Calebasse, arming herself with a hatchet. Nicolas, brandishing his formidable knife, watched a favourable moment to throw himself on his brother. "I tell you," cried he "that you and your 'canaille' of a Louve, I'll crush you both; and I commence. Now, mother—now, Calebasse, let us cool him; this has lasted too long." And, believing the time favourable for his attack, the brigand rushed towards his brother with his knife raised.

Martial, very expert with a club, retreated quickly, lifted his stick, made a quick turn with it in the air, describing a figure eight, and let it fall heavily on the arm of Nicolas, who, hurt severely, dropped his knife. "Brigand, you have broken my arm." cried he, taking hold of his arm with his left hand.

"No, I felt my club rebound," answered Martial, kicking the knife under the table. Then, profiting by the situation of Nicolas, he took him by the collar, pushed him roughly backward towards the door of the little cellar, opened it with one hand, and with the other he threw him in and shut the door.

Returning afterwards to the two women, he took Calebasse by the shoulders, and, in spite of her resistance, her cries, and a blow from the hatchet, which wounded him slightly in the hand, he locked her in the lower room of the tavern which was adjoining the kitchen: then, addressing the widow, still stupified at this manœuvre, as skilful as it was unexpected, he said, coldly, "Now, mother, for us two." "Well! yes; for us two," cried the widow, and her stoical face became animated, her wan complexion became suffused, her eyes sparkled, anger and hatred gave a terrible character to her features. "Yes; now for us two!" said

she, in a threatening tone; "I expected this moment—you shall know at last what I have in my heart." "And I also, I will tell you." "If you live a hundred years you shall recollect this night." "I shall remember it! My brother and sister wished to murder me; you did nothing to prevent it. But, come, speak: what have you against me?"

"What have I?" "Yes." "Since the death of your father, you have done nothing but cowardly acts!" "I?" "Yes, coward! Instead of staying with us to sustain us, you fled to Rambouillet, to poach in the woods with the game pedlar you knew at Bercy." "If I had remained here, I should now have been at the galleys, like Ambrose, or ready to go, like Nicolas; I did not wish to be a robber like the others—hence your hatred." "And what was your trade? You stole game; you stole fish; no danger in that, coward?" "Fish, as well as game, belong to no one; to-day in one place, to-morrow in another; it is for who can get it. I do not steal; as for being a coward—" "You fight, for money, men who are weaker than you are!" "Because they have beaten those who are weaker than they are." "Trade of a coward!" "There are none honest, it is true; it is not for you to tell me of it." "Why have you not followed these honest callings, instead of lounging here and living at my expense?" "I give you the first fish I take and what money I have; it is not much, but it is enough. I cost you nothing. I have tried to be a locksmith, to gain more; but when one from his infancy has idled on the river and in the woods, one can't do anything else; it is done for life. And besides, I have always preferred to live alone, on the river or in the woods; there no one questions me. Instead of that, in other places, if any one should ask me of my father, must I not answer—guillotined! of my brother—galley slave! of my sister—thief!" "And of your mother, what would you say?"

"I'd say she was dead." "And you would do well; it is all as—I disown you, coward! Your brother is at the galleys! Your grandfather and father have bravely finished on the scaffold, in defying the priest and the executioner. Instead of avenging them, you tremble!" "Avenge them?"

"Yes, to show yourself a *real Martial*, spit on the knife of Charlot and his red cap, and finish like father and mother, brother and sister."

As habituated as Martial was to the ferocious bombast of his mother, he could not refrain from shuddering,

She resumed, with increasing fury, "Oh, coward! You wish to be honest! Honest? is it that you shall not always be despised, as the son of a murderer, brother of a galley-slave; but you, instead of hugging vengeance, you are afraid! instead of biting, you fly; when they cut off your father's head, you left us, coward! And you knew we could not leave the island without being hunted and howled after like mad dogs—oh! they shall pay for it."

"One man—ten men can't make me afraid! but to be pointed at by everybody as the son and brother of condemned criminals—well, no. I could not stand it. I preferred to go and poach with Pierre, the game-seller." "Why did you not remain in the woods?" "I came back on account of my affair with the guard, and, above all, on account of the children; because they were of an age to be ruined by bad example!" "What is that to you?" "To me? because I do not wish to see them become like Ambrose, Nicolas, and Calebasse."

"Not possible." "And alone, with you all, they would not have failed. I made myself an apprentice to try to earn something, to take them with me, and leave the island; but at Paris, every one knew it; it was always, son of the 'guillotined'—brother of the galley-slave. I had continual fights. It tired me."

"And that did not tire you to be honest; that succeeded so well, instead of having the heart to return to us, to do as we do—as the children shall do in spite of you. You think you will stuff them with your preachings; but we are there. François already belongs to us—nearly—the first occasion and he shall be of the band."

"I tell you no." "You will see. I know it. There is vice at the bottom: but you restrain him. As to Amandine, when she is once fifteen, she will go alone. Ah, they have thrown stones at us. They have hunted us like mad dogs! They shall see what our family is—except you, coward; for here you alone make us blush."

"It is a pity." "And as you may be spoiled here with us, tomorrow you will go from this, never to return."

Martial looked at his mother with surprise; after a moment's pause, he said, "You tried to get up a quarrel at supper to arrive at this [illegible] to show you what you may expect if you

stay here in spite of us; do you understand!—a hell upon earth. Every-day disputes, blows, fights; and we shall not be alone to-night; we will have friends to help us; you'll not hold on a week."

"You think to frighten me?" "I tell you what will happen to you." "No matter. I remain."

"You will remain here?" "Yes." "In spite of us?" "In spite of you, and Calebasse, and Nicolas, and all others of the same kidney." "Stop, you make me laugh."

"I tell you I'll remain here until I find the means to earn my living elsewhere, with the children; alone, I should not be embarrassed. I should return to the woods; but, on their account, I want more time to find out what I want. Until then, I remain." "Ah, you remain until you can take away the children?" "As you say." "Take away the children?" "When I say to them, 'Come,' they will come, and running, too, I'll answer for it."

The widow shrugged her shoulders, and replied, "Listen to me. I told you, just now, if you were to live a thousand years, you would remember this night. I am going to explain to you why; but, once more, have you well decided not to go?" "Yes, yes; a thousand times, yes." "Directly you'll say no, a thousand times, no. Listen to me well. Do you know what trade your brother follows?"

"I suspect, but I don't want to know." "You shall know. He steals." "So much the worse for him." "And for you?" "For me?" "He is a burglar; a galley affair; we receive his plunder; if it is discovered, we shall be condemned to the same punishment as receivers, and you also; the family will be carried off, and the children will be turned into the streets, where they will learn the trade of your father and grandfather quite as well as here."

"I arrested as a receiver, as your accomplice! On what proof?"

"No one knows how you live; you are a vagrant on the water—you have the reputation of a bad man—you live with us. Who will you make believe that you are ignorant of our doings?" "I will prove to the contrary." "We will accuse you as our accomplice." "Accuse me, why?" "To reward you for remaining here in spite of us." "Just now you wished to alarm me in one way; now it is in another; that don't take; I shall

prove that I have never stolen. I remain." "Ah, you remain? Listen, then, once more. Do you remember what happened last Christmas night?" "Christmas night?" said Martial, endeavouring to collect his thoughts. "Recollect well." "I do not recollect." "You do not remember that Bras-Rouge brought here, at night, a man well dressed, who wished to be concealed?" "Yes; now I remember. I went up stairs to bed, and left him at supper with you. He passed the night here. Before daylight, Nicolas took him to Saint Ouen."

"You are sure Nicolas took him to Saint Ouen?"

"You told me so the next morning." "Christmas night you were, then, here?" "Yes; well?" "On that night, that man, who had so much money with him, was killed in this house." "He! Here?" "And robbed, and buried in the little wood-house." "It is not true!" cried Martial, becoming pale with alarm, and not willing to believe in this new crime of his kindred. "You wish to alarm me. Once more I say it is not true." "Ask your protégée, François, what he saw, this morning, in the wood-house." "François! and what did he see?" "One of the feet of the man sticking out of the ground. Take the lantern; go there and satisfy yourself." "No," said Martial, wiping the cold sweat from his brow. "No, I do not believe you. You tell me that to—" "To prove to you that, if you live here in spite of us, you run the risk every moment to be arrested as an accomplice in murder and robbery. You were here on Christmas night; we will say how you gave us your aid; how can you prove to the contrary?" "Oh, God!" said Martial, hiding his face in his hands. "Now will you go?" said the widow, with a sarcastic smile.

Martial was thunderstruck; he did not doubt the truth of what his mother had said; the roving life he led; his residence with a family so criminal, might cause heavy suspicions to fall upon him, and these might be changed into certainties in the eyes of justice, if his mother, his brother, his sister, pointed to him as their accomplice. The widow enjoyed the situation of her son.

"You have the means to escape from this; denounce us."

"I ought to do it, but I shall not; you know it well."

"It is for this I have told you all. Now will you go?"

Martial tried to soften his mother. With a mellowed voice, he said, "Mother, I do not believe you capable of this murder."

"As you like; but go away." "I will go, on one condition." "No conditions." "You will place the children, as apprentices, far from this, in the provinces." "They shall remain here." "Come now, mother, when you have made them like Nicolas, Ambrose, father, what good will it answer you?"

"To do some good business with their aid. We are not yet too many. Calebasse remains here with me to keep the tavern. Nicolas is alone; once taught, François and Amandine will help him. They threw stones at them also, children as they were. They must revenge themselves."

"Mother, you love Calebasse and Nicolas, don't you?"

"What then?" "They go to the scaffold like their father."

"What then—what then?" "And does not their fate make you tremble?" "Their fate shall be mine—neither better nor worse. I steal, they steal. I kill, they kill. Who takes the mother will take the children. We will not be separated. If our heads fall, they shall fall in the same basket where they will say adieu! We will not turn back; you are the only coward in the family! we drive you away. Get out."

"But the children? the children?"

"The children will grow up. I tell you, except for you, they would have been already formed. François is almost ready; when you are gone, Amandine shall make up for lost time."

"Mother, I entreat you, consent to send the children away as apprentices far from here." "How many times must I tell you that they are in *apprenticeship here?*"

The widow articulated these words in such a stern manner, that Martial lost all hope of softening this heart of bronze.

"Since it is thus," said he, in a resolute and brief tone, "listen to me in your turn, mother; I remain."

"Ah! ah!" "Not in this house. I should be murdered by Nicolas, or poisoned by Calebasse; but as I have not the means to lodge elsewhere, the children and I will live in the hovel at the other end of the island: the door is strong; I will make it stronger. Once there, well barricaded, with my gun, my dog, and my club, I fear no one. To-morrow morning I will take away the children; they will come with me, sometimes, in my boat, sometimes on the mainland. At night they shall sleep near me in the cabin; we will live on my fishing. This shall continue until I find a place for them; and I will find one." "Ah, is it

so ?" "Neither you, nor my brother, nor Calebasse can prevent it. If your thefts and your murders are discovered while I am still on the island, so much the worse; I must run my chance, I shall explain that I returned; that I remained on account of the children, to prevent their becoming rogues. They can judge. But may the thunder crush me if I leave this island, and if the children remain one day more in this house. Yes, and I defy you—defy you and yours to drive me from the island!" The widow knew the resolution of Martial; the children loved their eldest brother as much as they feared him; they would follow him then without hesitation when he wished it. As to him, well armed, resolute, always on his guard; in his boat during the day; barricadoed during the night in his cabin, he had nothing to fear from any evil designs of his family. The project of Martial could then, on all points, be realized. But the widow had many reasons to prevent the execution.

In the first place, as honest artisans consider sometimes the number of their children as riches, on account of their services, so the widow counted on Amandine and François to assist her in her crimes. Then, what she had said of her desire to avenge her husband and her son was true. Certain beings, nursed, become aged, hardened in crime, enter into open revolt, into a murderous warfare against society, and believe, by new acts of guilt, to avenge themselves for the just punishment which has overtaken them and theirs. And then, the wicked designs of Nicolas against Fleur de Marie, and, still later, against the diamond broker, might be defeated by the presence of Martial. The widow had hoped to bring about an immediate separation between herself and Martial, either by fomenting the quarrel with Nicolas, or by revealing to him what risk he ran by remaining on the island. As cunning as she was acute, the widow, perceiving that she was mistaken, felt that it was necessary to have recourse to perfidy to entrap her son in a bloody snare. She resumed, then, after a long silence, and with affected bitterness: "I see your plan; you do not wish to denounce us yourself—you wish to do it through the children." "I?" "They know that there is a man buried here; they know that Nicolas has stolen: once in apprenticeship, they will speak; we shall be taken, and we shall all be executed —you as well as we; that's what will happen if I listen to you—if I allow you to place the children elsewhere. And yet you say

you don't wish us any harm! I do not ask you to love me; but do not hasten the moment when we shall be taken." The softened tone of the widow made Martial believe that his threats had produced a salutary effect; he fell into a frightful snare.

"I know the children," replied he. "I am sure, if I tell them to say nothing, they will be quiet; besides, I shall always be with them, and will answer for their silence."

"Can any one answer for the words of a child? at Paris, above all, where people are so curious and talkative? It is as much to keep them silent as to aid us that I wish to keep them here." "Do they not go to the village and to Paris now? Who prevents them from speaking, if they wish to speak? If they were far away from here, so much the better: what they might say would be of no consequence." "Far from here, and where is that?" said the widow, looking steadily at her son.

"Let me take them away; no consequence to you."

"How would you live?" "My old locksmith is a good man. I will tell him what is necessary, and perhaps he will lend me something on account of the children; with that I'll go and bind them out, far away from this. We set out in two days, and you will never hear more of us."

"No; I prefer to have them with me. I shall be more sure of them." "Then I establish myself to-morrow at the hovel, waiting for something better. I have a head also, and you know it." "Yes, I know it. Oh, how I wish to see you far away from this! Why did you not stay in your woods?"

"I offer to rid you both of myself and the children."

"You would leave La Louve, then—she whom you love so well?"

"That's my business: I know what I have to do; I have a plan."

"If I let you take them away, will you never return to Paris?'

"In three days we will be off, and be like the dead for you."

"I prefer to have it so, rather than you should always be here, and be suspicious of them. Come, since it must be so, take them away, and clear out as soon as possible, that I may never see you again." "Is this settled?" "It is. Give me the key of the cellar, so that I can release Nicolas."

"No; he can sleep off his wine there." "And Calebasse?'

"It is different. You can open the door after I have gone to bed; it makes me feel ill to see her." "Go; and may the devil confound you." "It is your good-night, mother." "Yes." "Happily, it will be the last," said Martial.

"The last," replied the widow. Her son lighted a candle, and, opening the kitchen door, whistled to his dog, which came bounding in, and followed his master to the upper story of the mansion. "Go! your account is finished," muttered the mother, shaking her fist at her son, who had just gone up stairs: "you have brought it on yourself." Then, assisted by Calebasse, who went to look for a bunch of false keys, the widow picked the lock of the cellar where Nicolas was confined, and set him at liberty.

Martial reached his chamber without any further trouble, after his conversation with the widow, believing Nicolas locked up until the next morning. Seeing a ray of light issuing from the door of the children's room, he went in. They both ran to him and embraced him tenderly. "How, have you not yet gone to bed, little chatterers?"

"No, brother—we waited for you to come and say good-night," said Amandine. "And, besides, some one was talking very loud, down stairs, as if it were a quarrel," added François.

"Yes," said Martial, "I had a dispute with Nicolas, but it is nothing; besides, I am glad to find you up. I have some good news to tell you." "Us, brother?" "Would you like to go with me away from here—far away?" "Oh, yes, brother!" "Well, in two or three days, we will, all three of us, leave the island."

"How glad I am!" cried Amandine, clapping her hands. "But where shall we go to?" asked François. "You shall see, inquisitive; but never mind, wherever we go, you shall learn a good trade, which will make you be able to earn your living—that is sure." "Shall I not go any more fishing with you, brother?" "No, my boy; you shall go as an apprentice to a cabinet-maker or locksmith; you are strong, active; with courage and in working hard, at the end of a year you will be able to earn something; oh, come now, what is the matter—you do not appear to be pleased?" "It is, brother, that—I—" "Well, go on." "Would rather remain with you, and fish, mend your nets, than to learn a trade." "Really?" "To be shut up in a shop all

day, so gloomy; and then to be an apprentice, it is so tiresome." Martial shrugged up his shoulders. "You would rather be idle, a vagabond, a rover, is it not so?" said he severely, "while waiting to become a robber." "No, brother, but I would rather live here with you, as we live here; that's all." "Yes, that's it—to eat, drink, sleep, and amuse yourself with fishing like a citizen?" "I like that better." "It is very probable; but you must like something else. Look here, my poor François, it is high time that I take you from this place; without knowing it, you will become as bad as the others. Mother was right—I am afraid you are rather vicious. And you, Amandine, don't you wish to learn a trade?" "Oh, yes, brother. I would rather learn one than stay here. I shall be so glad to go away with you and François." "But what have you got on your head?" said Martial, remarking the triumphant head-dress of Amandine. "A foulard which Nicolas gave me." "He gave me one, also," said François, proudly. "And where did they come from? It would surprise me if Nicolas had bought them for you." The two children hung their heads, without replying. After a moment's pause, François said, resolutely, "Nicolas gave them to us; we don't know where they came from; is it not so, Amandine?" "No, no, brother!" answered she, stammering and blushing, and not daring to raise her eyes. "Do not tell a lie!" said Martial, severely. "We do not lie!" added François, boldly, "Amandine, my child, tell me the truth," said Martial, gently. "Well, to tell the whole truth," answered Amandine, timidly, "they came from a box of goods which Nicolas brought in his boat." "And which he has stolen?" "I think so, brother, from a galley." "Do you see, François! you told a lie," said Martial. The boy hung down his head, without answering. "Give me the foulard, Amandine; give me yours also, François!" The little girl took off her head-dress, took a last look at the enormous rosette, and give it to Martial, stifling a sigh of regret. François drew his slowly from his pocket, and, like his sister, returned it to Martial. "To-morrow morning," said he, "I will give these to Nicolas; you should not have taken them, my children; to profit by a theft is the same as if one were the thief." "It's a pity—they are so handsome!" said François. "When you have learned a trade, and earn some money, you can buy some quite as handsome. Come, go to bed, it is late, my children," "You are not angry, brother?" said

Amandine, timidly. "No, no, my girl, it is not your fault. You live with rogues—you do as they do without knowing it. When you are with honest people, you will do as they do; and you soon shall be there—or the devil take me. "Good night." "Good night, brother!" and embracing them both, Martial departed.

Their door was double-locked on the outside.

"We are shut up!" cried François. "Ah! what for brother; What are they going to do with us?" "Perhaps it is Martial." "Listen, listen, his dog barks!" said Amandine. "It sounds to me as if they were hammering something," said François; "perhaps they are trying to break open Martial's door." "Yes, yes his dog barks all the time." "Listen, François! now it sounds like driving nails. I am afraid. What could our brother have done; now hear how the dog howls." "Amandine, I hear nothing now," said François, approaching the door. The two children holding their breath, listened with anxiety.

"Now they return," said François, in a low tone, "I hear them walking in the corridor." "Let us jump into bed, mother would kill us if she found us up," said Amamdine. "No," answered François, still listening: "they have just passed our door; they are running down stairs; now they open the kitchen door." "You think so" "Yes, yes; I know the noise it makes." "Martial's dog keeps on howling," said Amandine; then suddenly, she cried, "François, my brother calls us." "Martial?" "Yes; don't you hear him?" And, notwithstanding the thickness of the two closed doors, the stentorian voice of Martial, calling to the children, could be heard. "My God! we cannot go to him—we are locked up," said Amandine: they wish to do him some harm, since he calls to us." "Oh, as for that—if I could prevent them," cried François resolutely, "I would, if they were to cut me to pieces." "But our brother does not know that we are locked up; he will think that we will not help him; call to him François, that we are shut up!" He was about to follow the advice of his sister, when a violent blow shook the blind on the outside of the little window of their room. "They are coming that way to kill us!" cried Amandine, and in her fright, she threw herself on the bed, and covered her face with her hands.

François remained immovable, although he partook of the alarm of his sister. Yet, after the violent blow of which we have spoken, the blind was not opened; the most profound silence reigned throughout the house. Martial had ceased to call the children.

Somewhat recovered, and excited by a lively curiosity, François ventured to half open the window, and tried to see without, through the slits of the blinds. "Take care, brother," whispered Amandine, who, on hearing François open the window, partly raised herself up. "Do you see anything?" "No, the wind blows too hard." "Come back, come back, then!" "Ah, now I see something." "What then?" "The light of a lantern; it comes and goes." "Who carries it?" "I only see the light. Ah, now it comes nearer, some one speaks." "Who is that?" "Listen, listen! it is Calebasse." "What does she say?" "She tells them to hold firm the foot of the ladder." "Ah, do you see, it was in taking away the large ladder which was against our window, that they made such a noise just now." "I hear nothing more." "What are they doing with the ladder now?" "I can't see anything more." "Do you hear nothing?" "No." "François, it is perhaps, to get into our brother Martial's room by the window that they have taken the ladder." "That may be." "If you would open the shutter a little to see—" "I dare not." "Only a little." "Oh, no, no. If my mother should see it—" "It is so dark there is no danger." François, yielding to the entreaties of his sister, opened the blinds, and looked out. "Well brother!" said Amandine, overcoming her tears, and approaching François on tiptoe. "By the light of the lantern," said he, "I see Calebasse, who is holding the foot of the ladder; it is placed against Martial's window." "What then?" "Nicolas goes up the ladder; he has his hatchet in his hands; I see it shine." "Ah, you are not gone to bed, and you are spying us!" cried the widow suddenly, calling to François and his sister. Just as she was going into the kitchen, she saw the light from the half opened window. The unfortunate children had neglected to extinguish their light. I am coming up," added the widow in a terrible voice; "I am coming to you little spies."

Such are the events which took place at the Island of the Ravageurs the evening of the day previous to that on which Madame Seraphin was to conduct thither Fleur de Marie.

CHAPTER IV.

VICTIMS OF AN ABUSE OF CONFIDENCE.

Let the reader imagine a closet situated on the fourth story of a house in the Passage de la Brasserie.

A pale and gloomy light hardly penetrated this narrow apartment, through a little window of cracked, dirty glass, and a single shutter; a yellowish dilapidated paper covered the walls; from the broken ceiling hung long spider-webs. The floor, broken in several places, showed the beams and laths of the room below. A table of white wood, a chair, an old trunk without a lock, and a flock bed with coarse sheets and an old woollen covering, such was the furniture of this garret. On the chair was seated the Baroness de Fermont. On the bed reposed Mademoiselle Claire de Fermont (such was the names of the two victims of Jacques Ferrand). Possessing but one narrow bed, the mother and daughter slept by turns, dividing thus the hours of the night. Themother had too much anguish, too many inquietudes, to get much repose; but the daughter found some moments of rest and forgetfulness. She was now asleep. Nothing could be more touching, more sorrowful, than the sight of this misery imposed by the cupidity of the notary on two women, until then accustomed to the sweet enjoyments of a life of ease, and surrounded in their native town with that consideration which an honourable and honoured family always inspire.

Madame de Fermont was about thirty-six years of age; her countenance at once expresses mildness and excellence; her features formerly of remarkable beauty, are now sadly changed; her black hair, divided on her forehead and confined behind her head, already shows some tresses of silver. Clothed in a dress of mourning, pierced in several places, with her hand supporting her head, she leaned against the wretched bed of her child, and regarded her with inexpressible anguish.

Claire was only sixteen; her complexion had lost its dazzling purity; her beautiful dark eye-lashes reached to her hollow cheeks. Once humid and rosy, but now dry and pale, her lips, half opened, displayed the enamel of her teeth: the rude contact of the bedclothes, had given a red appearance in several places to the delicate neck, arms, and shoulders of the young girl. From time to time a slight shudder passed over her, as if she had some painful dream. For a long period Madame de Fermont had not wept; she looked on her danghter with a dry and inflamed eye, consumed by a slow fever, which was undermining her. Each day she found herself weaker; but fearing to alarm Claire, and not willing, we may say, to alarm herself, she struggled with all her strength

against the first symptoms of her sickness. Through motives of similar generosity, the daughter endeavoured to conceal her sufferings. These two unhappy creatures, afflicted with the same griefs, were yet to be afflicted with the same disease. In misfortunes there are often moments when the future prospect is so frightful, that the most energetic minds dare not look it in the face, but shut their eyes, and endeavour to deceive themselves by mad illusions. Such was the position of Madame and Mademoiselle de Fermont. To express the tortures of this woman, during the long hours which she was thus contemplating her sleeping child, thinking of the past, the present, and the future, would be to describe what, in the holy and sacred griefs of a mother, there is the most poignant, the most desperate, the most insane; enchanting recollections, sinister fears, terrible foresights, bitter regrets, extreme dejectedness, ejaculations of powerless rage against the author of so much misery, vain supplications, violent prayers, and, finally, frightful doubts of the all powerful justice of him who remains inexorable to this cry, dragged from the bottom of the maternal heart—to the sacred cry of which the echo ought to reach Heaven. Pity for my child!

"How cold she is now!" said the poor mother, touching lightly the icy hand and arm of her daughter: "She is very cold; one hour ago she was burning; it is fever; happily, she does not know she has it. My God! how cold she is, this covering is so thin. I would put my old shawl on the bed; but if I take it down from the door, where I have hung it, some of those drunken men will come and look through the cracks, as they did yesterday. What a horrible house! If I had known what kind of place it was before I paid in advance, we should not have staid here; but I did not know—when one has no papers—could I think that I should ever have need of a passport? When I left Angiers in my own carriage, could I have thought—but this is infamous: because the notary has been pleased to rob me, I am reduced to the most frightful extremity, and against him I can do nothing."

"Oh! this notary; he does not know the frightful consequences of his robbery. Alas, yes, I never dare tell my child my fears—not to grieve her; but I suffer; I have a fever; I can hardly sustain myself; I feel within me the germs of a malady—dangerous, perhaps—my bosom is on fire; my heart throbs; Oh God! if I should fall sick—if I should die! No, no, I will

not—I cannot die—leave Claire—alone, abandoned in Paris —can it be possible? No! I am not sick, after all—what do I feel! a little heat, a heaviness about the head, caused, no doubt, from my uneasiness — from cold — oh, it is nothing serious. Come, come, no more of such weakness. It is by cherishing such ideas, it is in listening thus, that one really falls sick—and I have the time truly! must I not occupy myself in finding some work for Claire and myself, since this man who gave us engravings to colour—" Then, after a pause, she added, with indignation:

"Oh, this is abominable! to give this work at the price of Claire's—to take from us this miserable means of existence, because I would not allow my child to go and work at his rooms. Perhaps we may find work elsewhere; but when one knows nobody, it is so difficult. When one is so miserably lodged they inspire no confidence; and yet, the small sum that remains once gone, what shall we do? what will become of us? * * *

"If the laws leave this crime unpunished, I will not; for, if fate pushes me to the end; if I do not find the means to emerge from the atrocious position in which this wretch has placed me and my child, I do not know what I shall do; I shall be capable of killing him—I—this man; then they can do what they will with me. Yes—but my child? my child? To leave her alone, abandoned—ah, no, I do not wish to die; for this, I cannot kill this man. What would come of her? she, at sixteen —she is young, and pure as an angel; but she is handsome—but misery, hunger, abandonment; what may they not cause? and then; into what abyss may she not fall? Oh, it is frightful—poverty! frightful enough for any one; but, perhaps, more so for those who have always lived in opulence. I cannot beg—I must absolutely see my child starve before I can beg! What a coward—yet—"

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Two or three violent knocks at the door made her tremble and awoke her daughter with a start. "My God! mamma, what is that?" cried Claire, sitting up in bed; then throwing her arms around her mother's neck, who, very much alarmed, pressed her child to her bosom. "Mamma, what is it then?" repeated Claire. I do not know, my child; but do not be afraid, it is nothing; some one knocked; it is, perhaps, the letter we expect." At this moment the worm-eaten door shook again, under

repeated blows with the fist. "Who is there?" said Madame de Fermont, in a trembling voice. A coarse, rough voice answered, "Ah, are you deaf, neighbour?" "What do you want? I do not know you," said Madame de Fermont, trying to conceal the agitation of her voice. "I am Robin your neighbour; give me some fire to light my pipe; come, make haste!" "Oh, it is that lame man, who is always drunk," said the mother to her child. "Ah, are you going to give me any light? or, I'll break all open in the name of thunder!" "Sir, I have no light." "You must have some matches, then; everybody has them; do you open—come?" "Sir, go away." "You won't open—once—twice?"

"I beg you to go away, or I will call." "Once—twice—three times—no, you won't? Then I'll break all down, see! then." And the wretch gave such a furious kick at the door, he burst it in, the miserable lock breaking at the first assault. The two women screamed with alarm. Madame de Fermont, notwithstanding her weakness, threw herself before the bandit and barred his entrance. "Sir, this is outrageous; you shall not come in," cried the unhappy mother; I shall cry for help." "For what?" answered he: mus'nt we be neighbourly? If you had opened, I should not have broken in." Then, with the stupid obstinacy of drunkenness, he added, staggering, "I wish to come in; I will come in, and I will not go out until I have lit my pipe." "I have neither fire nor matches. In the name of Heaven, retire." "It's not true; you say that so I shan't see the little one in bed. Yesterday you stopped up all the holes in the door. She is pretty; I want to see her. Take care of yourself, I'll scratch your face if you don't let me come in. I tell you that I will see the little one in bed, and I will light my pipe, or I'll smash everything, and you along with it!" "Help! help!" cried Madame de Fermont, who felt the door giving way under a violent push of the lame man. Intimidated by these cries, the man stepped backward and shook his fist at Madame de Fermont, saying, "You shall pay me for this; I will return to-night—I'll catch hold of your tongue, and you cannot cry." And he descended the stairs, uttering horrible oaths. Madame de Fermont, fearing that he might return, and seeing the lock broken, drew the table against the door to barricade it. Claire had been so alarmed at this horrible scene, that she had fallen on her cot

almost without motion, with a violent attack of the nerves. Madame de Fermont, forgetting her own alarm ran to her daughter, pressed her in her arms, made her drink a little water, and with the most tender caresses, succeeded in calming her. "Be composed, my poor child; this bad man has gone away." Then the wretched mother cried, with a touching accent, "Yet it is the notary who is the cause of all our troubles. Compose yourself, my child," resumed she, tenderly, embracing her daughter: "This wretch is gone." "Oh, mamma, if he should come back again? You see you have called for help, and no one has come. Oh, I entreat you; let us leave this house, I shall die with fear." "How you tremble! you have a fever?" "No, no," said the young girl, to pacify her mother; it is nothing; it is fright; it will pass over; and you, how are you? Give me your hands. Oh how burning hot they are. Ah! you are suffering: you wish to conceal it from me." "Do not think so: I am better than ever; it is the emotion which this has caused me which makes me thus; I slept on the chair very soundly; I only awoke when you did." "Yet, mamma, your poor eyes are very red, very much inflamed." "Ah, well, my child, on a chair, sleep is not so refreshing, you know." "Really, do you not suffer?" "No, no, I assure you; and you?" "Not I; only I tremble still from fear. I entreat you, mamma, let us leave this house." "And where shall we go to? You know with how much trouble we found this wretched place; and, besides, we have paid two weeks in advance; they will not return us our money; and we have so little left; so little, that we should manage as closely as possible." "Perhaps some day Saint Remy will answer your letter." "I no longer hope it; it is so long since I have written." "He might not have received your letter; why do you not write to him again? From hence to Angiers is not so far; we shall soon have an answer." "My poor child, you know how much this has cost me already." "What do you risk? he is so good, notwithstanding his roughness! Was he not one of my father's old friends? and, besides, he is our relation. But he is poor himself; his fortune is very small. Perhaps he does not reply to avoid the mortification of being obliged to refuse us." "But if he has not received your letter, mamma?" "And if he has received it, my child; of two things choose one: either he is in such a situation that he cannot come to our aid, or he feels no

interest for us; then why expose ourselves to a refusal or a humiliation?" "Come, courage, mamma, we have one hope left. Perhaps this morning will bring us a happy answer." "From M. d'Orbigny? Without doubt. This letter of which you formerly made a draft, was so simple, so touching—exposed so naturally our misfortunes, that he will have pity on us. Really, I do not know what tells me you are wrung to despair and ruin." "He has so little reason to interest himself about us: he had, it is true, formerly known your father, and I often heard my brother speak of D'Orbigny, as of a man with whom he had been on friendly terms before he left Paris with his young wife." "It is just on that account that I have hopes; he has a young wife, she will be compassionate; and, besides, in the country one can do so much good. He will take you, I suppose, for housekeeper; I will take care of the linen. Since d'Orbigny is very rich, in a large house, there is always employment." "Yes; but we have so little right to his interest. We are so unfortunate."

"That is frequently a title in the eyes of charitable people. Let us hope that D'Orbigny and his wife are so." "Well, in case that we need expect nothing from him, I will overcome my false shame, and will write to the Duchess of Lucenay; this lady of whom Saint Remy spoke so often, whose generosity and good heart, he so often praised? Yes, the daughter of the Prince du Noirmont. He knew her when she was very young, and he treated her almost as his child, for he was intimately connected with the prince. Madame de Lucenay must have many acquaintances; she could perhaps, find us a place."

"Doubtless, mamma, but I understand your reserve; you do not know her at all, while my poor father and uncle knew d'Orbigny a little."

"Finally, in case that Madame d'Orbigny can do nothing for us, I will have recourse to a last resource." "What is it mamma?" "It is a very weak one—a very foolish hope, perhaps; but why not try it? the son of Saint Remy is—" "Saint Remy has a son!" cried Claire, with astonishment. "Yes, my child, he has a son." "He never spoke of him; he never came to Angiers." "True, and for reasons you cannot know. Saint Remy having left Paris fifteen years ago, has not seen his son since." "Fifteen years without seeing his father, can it be possible?" "Alas! yes, you see it. I tell you that the son of Saint

Remy, being well known in the fashionable world, and very rich —" "Very rich, and his father is poor?" "All the fortune of Saint Remy, the son, came from his mother." "But no matter, how can he leave his father?" "His father would accept nothing from him." "Why is that?" "This is once more a question to which I cannot reply, my dear child; but I heard my dear brother say that the generosity of this young man was generally praised. Young and generous, he ought to be good. Thus, learning from me that my husband was the principal friend of his father, perhaps he might interest himself in procuring us some work or employment; he has so many brilliant and numerous relations, that this would be easy." "And then we could find out from him, perhaps, if Saint Remy, his father, should have left Angiers before you wrote to him; that would explain his silence." "I believe that Saint Remy, my child, has no intercourse with his father. In short, it is only to try." "Unless M. d'Orbigny should answer you in a favourable manner; and I repeat it, I do not know why, but, in spite of myself, I have hope." "But already, many days have elapsed, my child, since I have written, and nothing—nothing yet. A letter put in the office before four o'clock in the afternoon, arrives the next morning at Aubiers; five days have now passed since we might have received an answer." "Perhaps he is thinking before he writes, in what way he can be useful to us." "God hear you, my child." "It appears very plain to me, mamma, if he could do nothing for us, he would have informed you at once." "Unless he will do nothing at all." "Ah! mamma, can it be possible? not deign to answer us, and leave us to hope four days, eight days, perhaps; for when one is unfortunate, one hopes always." "Alas! my child, there is sometimes so much indifference for the woes which one does not know." "But your letter?" "My letter cannot give him an idea of our troubles, of our sufferings of each moment; can my letter picture to him our unfortunate life, our humiliations of every description, our existence in this frightful house, the alarm we have experienced even just now? Can my letter describe to him the horrible future which awaits us, if—but stop, my child, do not let us speak of this. Oh! you tremble, you are cold." "No, mamma; pay no attention to it; but, tell me, suppose that everything fails; that the little money which remains in that trunk is spent, can it be possible that in a rich

place like Paris, we should both die of hunger and misery, for want of work, and because a bad man has taken all you had?" "Hush! poor child." "But, mamma, could it be?" "Alas!" "But God, who knows all, who can do all, how could he abandon us, he whom we have not offended?" "I entreat you my child, do not have such gloomy ideas; I would rather see you hope, even against hope." "Come, rouse me up with your dear delusions; I am but too apt to be discouraged, you know well." "Yes, yes, let us hope; it is better. The nephew of the porter will soon return from the post office with a letter. One more errand to pay from your little treasure, and through my fault. If I had not been so feeble to-day and yesterday, we could have gone ourselves as we did before, but you would not leave me alone here to go yourself." "Could I, my child? Judge then, just now, this wretch who broke in the door, if you had been alone." "Oh! mamma, hush! only to think of it makes me shudder."

At this moment some one knocked sharply at the door. "Heavens! it is he," cried Madame de Fermont, and she pushed with all her strength the table against the door. Her fears, however, ceased when she heard the voice of the porter.—"Madame, my nephew, Andre, has come from the post office. Here is a letter with an X and a Z for address; it comes from a distance. There are eight sous postage and the commission—makes twenty sous." "Mamma, a letter from the country: we are saved; it is from Saint Remy or d'Orbigny. Poor mother, you shall suffer no more, no longer be uneasy about me; you shall be happy. God is just! God is good!" cried the young girl, and a ray of hope lighted up her sweet and charming face. "Oh! thank you, give it me quickly," said Madame de Fermont, pushing back the table, and half opening the door. "It is twenty sous, madame," said the receiver, showing the letter so impatiently desired. "I am going to pay you." "Ah! madame, par example; there is no hurry; I am going to the roof; in ten minutes I will descend, and take the money as I pass." Micou handed the letter to Madame de Fermont, and disappeared.

"The letter is from Normandy. On the stamp is *Aubiers*: it is from d'Orbigny!" cried Madame de Fermont, examining the address. "Well, mamma, was I right?" "My God, how my heart beats! Our good or bad fortune is, however, there," said Madame de Fermont, in a faltering voice, showing the letter.

Twice her trembling hand approached the seal to break it. She had not the courage. Can one hope to paint the terrible anguish suffered by those who, like Madame de Fermont, await from a letter, hope or despair? The burning and feverish emotion of a player whose last pieces of gold are staked on a single card, and who, breathless, the eye inflamed, awaits the decisive throw which saves or ruins him for ever; this emotion, so violent, would hardly give an idea of the terrible anguish of which we speak. In an instant the soul is lifted up with the most radiant hopes, or plunged in the blackest despair. The unfortunate being passes in turn through the most contrary emotions; ineffable feelings of happiness and gratitude towards the generous heart which had pity on his sorrows—a sad and bitter resentment against the selfish or indifferent. "What weakness," said Madame de Fermont, with a sad smile, seating herself on the bed of her daughter; "Once more, my poor Claire, our fate is there. I burn to know it, and I dare not. If it is a refusal, alas, it will always be soon enough." "And if it should be a promise of succour? say, mamma, if this letter contains good and consoling words, which will assure us as to the future, in promising us a modest employ in the house of d'Orbigny, each minute we lose, is it not a moment of happiness lost?" "Yes, my child; but if on the contrary—" "No, mamma; you are mistaken, I am sure of it—when I told you that d'Orbigny would not have waited so long to answer your letter, except to give you a favourable answer. Let me look at the letter, mamma; I am sure to guess, only from the writing, if the news be good or bad. Hold, I am sure of it now," said Claire, taking the letter; "you have only to look at the bold, good, and strong hand, suffer to see that the writer must be accustomed to give to those who suffer." "I entreat you, Claire, no more of these foolish hopes, or I can never open the letter." "Oh, mamma, without opening it, I can tell you what it contains; listen; Madame, your condition and that of your daughter, is so worthy of interest, that I beg you will have the goodness to come immediately to me in case you would like to take charge of my house." "My child once more I entreat you—no insane hopes; the reverse will be frightful. Come, courage," said Madame de Fermont, taking the letter from her daughter, and preparing to break the seal. "Courage, very well!" said Claire, smiling, and carried away by a feeling of confidence so natural at her age. "As for me, I have no need of it; I am

so sure of what I advance. Stop, do you wish me to open the letter? shall I read it? give it me, timid mamma."

"Yes—I would rather—hear. But no, no; it is better that I should." And Madame de Fermont broke the seal with indescribable emotion. Her daughter, also, in spite of her apparent confidence, could hardly breathe. "Read it aloud, mamma," said she. "The letter is not long! it is from the countess d'Orbigny," said Madame de Fermont, looking at the signature. "So much the better; it is good. Do you see, mamma, this excellent young lady has been pleased to answer you herself." "We shall see.

"MADAME,

"The Count d'Orbigny, very much indisposed for some time past, could not reply to you during my absence." "Do you see, mamma, it was not his fault." "Listen, listen." "Having arrived this morning from Paris, I hasten to write to you Madame, having conferred on the subject of your letter with Mr. d'Orbigny. He has but a faint recollection of the relationship which you suppose to have existed between him and your brother. As to the name of your husband madame, it is not unknown to d'Orbigny; but he cannot recollect under what circumstances he heard it mentioned. The pretended spoliation, of which you so lightly accuse Mr. Ferrand, whom we have the good fortune to have for a notary, is in the eyes of Mr. d'Orbigny, a cruel calumny, of which, doubtless, you have not counted the bearing. My husband, as well as myself, madame, know and admire the well-known probity of the respectable and pious man you attack so blindly. It is to inform you, madame, that Mr. d'Orbigny, feeling, doubtless, for the unfortunate situation in which you are placed, and of which it is not in his province to find out the real cause, finds it out of his power to assist you.

"Be pleased to receive, madame, with this expression of the regrets of Mr. d'Orbigny, the assurance of my most distinguished sentiments. "D'ORBIGNY."

The mother and daughter looked at each other, incapable of uttering a word. Micou knocked at the door and said, "Madame, can I come in for the postage and commission? It is twenty sous." "Ah, it is right; such good news! it is well worth what we spend in two days for our living." said Madame de Fermont, with a bitter smile; and leaving the letter on the bed, she went towards an old trunk without a lock, stooped down, and opened

it. "We are robbed!" cried the unhappy woman with horror. "Nothing—no more!" added she, in a mournful tone. And powerless, she leaned on the trunk. "What do you say, mamma? The bag of money?"

But Madame de Fermont arose quickly, went out of the chamber, and, addressing the receiver, she said, with a sparkling eye, and cheeks coloured with indignation and alarm, "Sir, I had a bag of money in this trunk; some one has robbed me—yesterday, doubtless, for I went out for an hour with my daughter. This money must be found. Do you hear? you are responsible." "Some one robbed you? It is not true; my house is honest," said the receiver, harshly and insolently. "You say that, so as not to pay me the twenty sous." "I tell you, sir, that this money, all that I possessed, in the world, some one has stolen; it must be found, or I'll make a complaint. Oh, I shall spare nothing: respect nothing: do you see I warn you." "That would be very fine, you, who have no papers, go and make your complaint; go at once. I defy you!" The unhappy woman was overcome. She could not go out and leave her daughter alone in bed, since the fright she had received in the morning, and above all after the threats addressed to her by the receiver. He continued: "It is a cheat; you had no more a bag of silver than a bag of gold; you don't want to pay me the postage, hey? Good! all the same; when you pass before my door, I will tear off your old black shawl from your shoulders; it is very threadbare, but it is worth at least twenty sous." "Ah, sir," cried Madame de Fermont, bursting into tears, "have pity on us. This small sum is all we had—my daughter and I; that stolen, we have nothing left: nothing, do you understand? nothing—but to starve!" "What would you have me do? If it is true that you have been robbed, and of silver, too, it has been spent long since; the money—"

"The villain who has stolen it would not have been simple enough to mark the money and keep it here, so that he might be caught—if it is some one in this house, which I do believe; for as I said only this morning to the uncle of the lady on the first floor, here is a real place for plunder; if you are robbed, it is your misfortune. For should you make a hundred thousand complaints, you would not recover a sous: you would gain nothing by it, I tell you: believe me. Well," cried the receiver, arousing himself, and seeing Madame de Fermont stagger, "what's the mat-

ter? You turn pale? Take care of her, Mademoiselle, your mother is sick," added he advancing in time to save her from falling. The fictitious energy which had so long sustained her gave way under this new affliction. "Mother—oh, God! what is the matter?" cried Claire, still in bed. The receiver, yet active and strong for his age, seized with a transitory feeling of pity, took Madame de Fermont in his arms, pushed open the door, and entered, saying, "Mademoiselle, pardon me for coming in while you are in bed, but I must bring in your mother; she has fainted; it can't last." On seeing this man enter, Claire uttered a cry of alarm, and concealed herself, as well as she could, under the bedclothes. The receiver seated Madame de Fermont on the chair near the bed, and retired, leaving the door half open.

One hour after this, the violent malady, which for so long a time had threatened Madame de Fermont, showed itself. Attacked by a violent fever and frightful delirium, the unfortunate woman was laid in the bed of her child, who, alone, alarmed, and almost as ill as her mother, had neither money nor resources, and feared at each moment to see the bandit enter who lived on the same floor.

CHAPTER V.

VISCOUNT SAINT REMY AND HIS FATHER.

The Viscount Saint Remy lived in the Rue du Chaillot, and occupied a charming little house, built between a court and garden, in this solitary quarter, although very near the Champs Elysées, the most fashionable promenade in Paris. It is useless to enumerate the advantages which Saint Remy derived from a position so wisely chosen. We will only say, a person could enter his house very secretly, through a little garden door, which opened on a small and very lonesome street. Madame de Lucenay had demanded a key of this little door. The interior of the mansion of Saint Remy presented a singular appearance; it was divided into two establishments; the ground floor where he received ladies, the first story, where he received gentlemen to dinner and play; in short, those he called his friends.

Thus, on the ground floor was a "chamber a coucher," which shone with gold, mirrors, flowers, silks, and lace; a small music-room, where were a harp and pianos (Saint Remy was an ex-

cellent musician), a cabinet of pictures and curiosities, the boudoir communicating with the green-house, a dining-room, bathing-room, and small library. It is useless to say that all these rooms, furnished with exquisite taste, had for ornaments some *Watteaus*, but little known, some Bouchers unheard off, groups of statuary, and on their stands of jasper, a few valuable copies, in white marble, of some of the finest groups of the museum. And when night came, calm and serene, how much shade, how much perfume, what silence in sweet-scented groves, whose thick foliage served as a canopy to the rustic sofas made of reeds and Indian mats. In winter, on the contrary, except the glass which opened on the observatory, all was closed; the transparent silk of the blinds, the heavy mass of lace and muslin curtains, rendered the light still more mysterious: on every disposable place large masses of exotics seemed to spring out of vases glittering with gold and enamel.

Such was the viscount. At Athens he had been, doubtless, admired; at the time of which we speak, he was nothing more than an unworthy forger, a miserable cheat. The Count de Saint Remy, his father, was a man of tall stature, still active and vigorous, notwithstanding his age; the almost copper colour of his skin contrasted strangely with the silvery whiteness of his beard and hair; his heavy and still black eyebrows overshadowed his piercing but sunken eyes. Although, from a kind of misanthropy, he wore clothes quite rusty, yet there was in his whole appearance that which commanded respect. The door of his son's house flew open, and he entered. A porter, in a grand livery of brown and silver, profusely powdered, and wearing silk stockings, appeared on the threshold of an elegant lodge. "M. de Saint Remy?" demanded the Count, in a short tone.

The porter, instead of replying, examined with much contempt the white beard, the threadbare coat, and the old hat of the unknown, who held in his hand a large cane. "M. de Saint Remy? repeated the Count, impatiently, shocked at the impertinent examination of the porter.

"The Viscount is not at home." So saying, he drew the cord, and with a significant gesture, invited the unknown to retire. "I will wait," said the count, and he passed on. "Oh, friend! one does not enter that way into houses!" cried the porter, running after the count, and taking him by the arm. "How, scoundrel!"

answered the old man, raising his cane; "you dare to touch me!" "I will dare something else, if you do not walk out at once. I have told you that the Count was out, so walk off." "Let me put a stop to this," replied the count, addressing Boyer, the valet; I wish to see my son—if he has gone out, I will wait." Boyer was ignorant neither of the existence nor of the misanthropy of the father, and sufficiently a physiognomist, he did not for a moment doubt the identity of the count, but bowed low to him, and answered, "If your lordship will be so good as to follow me, I am at your orders."

"Go on," said the count, who accompanied Boyer, to the profound dismay of the porter.

Preceded by the valet, the count arrived on the first story, and still following his guide, was ushered into a little saloon, situated immediately over the boudoir on the ground floor. "The Viscount has been obliged to go out this morning," said Boyer, "and if you will have the kindness to wait, it will not be long before he returns." And the valet disappeared.

Remaining alone, the count looked around him with indifference, until suddenly he discovered the picture of his wife, the mother of Florestan de Saint Remy. He crossed his arms on his heart, held down his head, as if to avoid the sight of this victim, and walked about with rapid steps.

"And yet I am not certain—he may be my son—sometimes this doubt is frightful to me. If he is my son, then my abandoning him, my refusal ever to see him, are unpardonable * * * and then to think my name—my name, of which I have ever been so proud, belongs to the son of a man whose heart I could have torn out! oh, I do not know why I am not bereft of my senses when I think of it." And Saint Remy, continuing to walk with agitation, raised mechanically the curtain which separated the saloon from the cabinet of Florestan, and entered the apartment.

He had hardly disappeared for a moment, when a small door, concealed by the tapestry, opened softly, and Madame de Lucenay, wrapped in a large shawl of green cashmere, and wearing a very plain black velvet bonnet, entered the saloon which the count had just left. The duchess had a key of the little private garden door; not finding Florestan in his apartments she had supposed that, perhaps, he was in his cabinet, and, without any fear, had

come up by a private staircase which led from the boudoir to the first story.

Madame de Lucenay, seeing no one, was about to enter the cabinet, when the curtains were thrown back, and she found herself face to face with the father of Florestan. She could not restrain a cry of alarm.

"Clothilde!" cried the count stupified. The duchess remained immovable, contemplating with surprise this old man with a white beard and badly clothed, whose features did not appear altogether strange. "You, Clothilde!" repeated the count, in a tone of sorrowful reproach, "you here—at the house of my son?" these words decided Madame de Lucenay; she at length recognised the father of Florestan, and cried:

"M. Saint Remy!" Her position was so plain and significant, that the duchess disdained to have recourse to a falsehood to explain the motive of her presence in this house; counting on the paternal affection which the count had formerly shown her, she extended her hand and said with an air—at once gracious, cordial, and fearless—which belonged only to her, "Come, do not scold! you are my oldest friend. Do you remember, more than twenty years ago, you used to call me your dear Clothilde!"

"Yes, I called you thus, but—" "I know in advance all that you will say to me; you know my motto: '*What is, is; what shall be, shall be.*'" "Ah, Clothilde." "Spare me your reproaches; let me rather speak to you of my joy at seeing you, your presence recalls so many things; my poor father, in the first place: and then my fifteenth year. Ah, sweet fifteen!"

"It is because your father was my friend, that—" "Oh, yes!" answered the duchess, interrupting him, "he loved you so much. Do you remember he called you, laughingly, 'the man with the green ribands?' You always said to him, 'You will spoil Clothilde; take care!' and he would answer, embracing me, 'I believe I spoil her; and I must make haste and spoil her more, for soon the world will carry her off, and spoil her in turn.' Excellent father! what a friend I lost!" A tear glistened in the fine eyes of Madame Lucenay, and giving her hand to M. Saint Remy, she said to him in an agitated voice, "True, I am happy, very happy to see you again; you awaken souvenirs so precious, so dear to my heart." "If you have been in Paris for any time," continued Madame de Lucenay, "it was very unkind in you not to come

and see me; we should have talked so much of the past; for you know I begin to arrive at the age when there is a great charm in talking to old friends."

Perhaps the duchess could not have spoken with more coolness if she had been receiving a visit at the Hotel de Lucenay. Saint Remy could not refrain from saying earnestly, "Instead of talking of the past, let us talk of the present; my son may come in from one moment to another, and—" "No," said Clothilde, interrupting him, "I have the key of the private door, and his arrival is always announced by a bell when he comes in by the gate, at this noise I shall disappear as mysteriously as I came; and I will leave you alone. What a sweet surprise you are going to cause him, you, who have for so long a time abandoned him! Hold! it is I, who have reproaches to make you." "To me?" "Certainly. What guide, what assistance had I on entering into society? and for a thousand things, the counsels of a father are indispensable. Thus frankly, it has been very wrong in you to—" Here Madame de Lucenay, giving way to the peculiarity of her character, could not prevent herself from laughing heartily, and saying to the count:

"You must avow that the position is at least singular, and that it is very piquant that I should preach to you." "It is rather strange; but I deserve neither your sermons nor your praises. I come to my son; but it is not on account of my son. At his age he can no longer need my counsels." "What do you mean?" "You must know for what reasons I detest society and hold Paris in horror," said the count. "Nothing but circumstances of the last importance could have induced me to leave Angiers, and, above all, to come here—in this house! But I have conquered my repugnance, and have recourse to every one who can aid me in researches of great interest to me." "Oh! then," said Madame de Lucenay, with most affectionate eagerness, "I beg you to dispose of me if I can be of any use to you. Is there need of any applications? M. de Lucenay ought to have a certain influence; for, on the days when I go to dine with my great Aunt Montbrison, he gives a dinner at home to some deputies; this is not done without some motive; this inconvenience must be paid for by some probable advantage. Once more, if we can serve you, command us. There is my young cousin, the little duke de Montbrison, who is connected with all the nobility, perhaps he

could do something? In this case, I offer him to you. In a word, dispose of me and mine; you know if I can call myself a devoted friend." "I know it; and I do not refuse your assistance; although, however—"

"Come, my dear *Alceste*, we are people of the world, let us act as such: whether we are here or elsewhere, it is of no import, I suppose, to the affair which interests you, and which now interests me extremely, since it is yours. Let us speak of this, and sincerely; I require it." Thus saying, the duchess approached the fireplace, and, leaning against it, she put out the prettiest little foot in the world to warm. With perfect tact, Madame de Lucenay seized the opportunity to speak no more of the viscount, and to converse with M. Saint Remy on a subject to which he attached much importance. * * * *

"You are ignorant, perhaps, Clothilde," said the count, "that for a long time past I have lived at Angiers?" "No; I knew it." "Notwithstanding the isolated state I sought, I had chosen this city, because one of my relations dwelt there, M. de Fermont, who, during my troubles, acted as a brother towards me, having acted as a second in a duel." "Yes, a terrible duel; my father told me of it," said Madame de Lucenay, sadly; "but happily, Florestan is ignorant of this duel, and also of the cause that led to it."

"I was willing to let him respect his mother," answered the count, suppressing a sigh: he continued, and related to Madame de Lucenay the history of Madame de Fermont up to the time of her leaving Angiers for Paris, after the reception of the news of her brother's suicide; to which he added: "At the end of some time, I learned that the furniture of the house which she occupied at Angiers, was sold by her orders, and that this sum had been employed to pay some debts left by Madame de Fermont. Uneasy at this circumstance, I inquired, and learned vaguely that this unfortunate woman and her daughter were in distress—the victims, doubtless, of a bankruptcy. If Madame de Fermont could, in such an extremity, count on any one, it was on me. Yet I received no news from her. You cannot imagine my sufferings, my inquietude. It was absolutely necessary that I should find them, to know why they did not apply to me, poor as I was. I set out for Paris, leaving a person at Angiers, who, if by chance any information was obtained, was to advise me."

"Well?" "Yesterday, I had a letter from Angiers; nothing was known. On arriving here I commenced my researches. I went at first to the former residence of the brother of Madame de Fermont. Here they told me she lived at the quay of the Canal Saint Martin." "And this—" "Had been her lodgings; but she had left, and they were ignorant of her new abode. Since then all my inquiries have been useless; and I have come here, in hopes that she may have applied to the son of her old friend. I am afraid that even this will be in vain."

For some minutes Madame de Lucenay had listened to the count with redoubled attention, suddenly she said, "Truly, this would be very singular, that these should be the same with those Madame d'Harville, is so much interested for." "Who?" "The widow of whom you speak is still young? and of a noble figure?" "She is so, but how do you know?" "Her daughter handsome as an angel, and about sixteen?" "Yes, yes!" "And is named Claire?" "Oh, in mercy, speak! where are they?" "Alas, I know not." "You do not know?" "This is what has happened: a lady of my acquaintance, Madame d'Harville, came to me to ask if I knew a widow who had a daughter named Claire, and whose brother had committed suicide. Madame d'Harville came to me because she had seen these words, '*Write to Madame de Lucenay,*' traced on the fragment of a letter which this unhappy woman had written to a person unknown, whose aid she entreated." "She intended to write to you, and why?" "I am ignorant, I do not know her."

"But she knew you!" cried Saint Remy, struck with a sudden idea." "What do you say?" "A hundred times she has heard me speak of your father, of you, of your generous and excellent heart. In her trouble, she must have thought of you." "This can be thus explained." "But Madame d'Harville, how did she get possession of this letter." "I am ignorant; all I know is, that, without knowing where this poor mother and child had taken refuge, she was, I believe, on their track." "Then I count upon you, Clothilde, to introduce me to Madame d'Harville; I must see her to-day." "Impossible! her husband has just fallen a victim to a frightful accident; a gun, which he did not know was loaded, went off while in his hands, and killed him on the spot." "Ah, this is horrible!" "The marchioness departed immediately, to pass her first mourning at her father's in Nor-

mandy." "Clothilde, I conjure you to write to her to-day; ask for what ever information she may possess; since she interests herself for these poor women, tell her she cannot have a warmer auxiliary than me; my sole desire is to find the widow of my friend, and to partake with her and her daughter the little I possess. It is now my sole family." "Always the same—always generous and devoted. Count on me, I will write to-day to Madame d'Harville. Where shall I send her answer?" "To Asnieres, post-office."

"What eccentricity; why do you lodge there and not at Paris?" "I hate Paris, on account of the souvenirs it awakens," answered Saint Remy, with a gloomy air; "my old physician, Doctor Griffin, has a small country-house on the banks of the Seine, near Asnieres; he does not live there in winter, and offered it to me; it is almost a faubourg of Paris; I could, after my researches, find there the solitude which pleases me; I have accepted." "I will write you, then, at Asnieres; I can, besides, give you now some information that may perhaps serve you, which I received from Madame d'Harville. The ruin of Madame de Fermont has been caused by the roguery of the notary who had the charge of all her fortune. He denies the deposit."

"The scoundrel! and what is his name?" "Jacques Ferrand," said the duchess, without being able to conceal her desire to laugh. "What a strange being you are, Clothilde. There is nothing in all this but what is serious and sad, yet you laugh!" said the count, surprised and vexed. "Pardon me, my friend," answered the duchess: it is that the notary is such a singular man, and they tell such strange things of him. But seriously, if his reputation as an honest man is no more merited than his reputation as a pious man (and I declare this usurped,) he is a wretch." "And he lives—"

"Rue du Sentier." "He shall have a visit from me. What you have told me coincides with certain suspicions." "What suspicions?" "From what I can learn respecting the death of the brother of my poor friend, I am almost led to believe that this unfortunate man, instead of committing suicide, has been the victim of an assassination." "Great God! and what makes you suppose this?" "Several reasons, which will be too long to tell you; I shall leave you now." "How? leave

me, without seeing Florestan?" "This interview would be too painful for me; you must comprehend it. I only braved it in the hopes of obtaining some information about Madame de Fermont, wishing to neglect no means to find her.

Now adieu." "Ah, you are without pity." "Do you not know?" "I know that your son has never had more need of your counsel." "How? Is he not rich—happy?" "Yes; but he does not know mankind. Blindly prodigal, because he is confiding and generous; in everything, everywhere. I fear he is abused. If you knew what a noble heart he has! I have never dared to lecture him on the subject of his expenses and extravagance; in the first place, because I am at least as foolish as he is; and then—for other reasons; but you, on the contrary, you could—" Madame de Lucenay did not finish; she heard the voice of Florestan. He entered precipitately into the cabinet adjoining the saloon; after having quickly shut the door, he said, in an agitated voice to some one who accompanied him, "But it is impossible." "But I repeat to you," answered the clear and piercing voice of Badinot, "I repeat to you that, without this, in four hours you will be arrested. For if he has not this money, our man will go and make a complaint, and you know the penalty of a *forgery* like this; the galleys, my poor viscount?" It is impossible to describe the look which Madame de Lucenay and the father of Florestan exchanged on hearing these terrible words.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONVERSATION.

On hearing these fearful words addressed to his son by Badinot, the count changed colour, and clung to a chair for support. His venerable and respected name dishonoured by a man whom he had reason to doubt was his son. His first feeling overcome, the angry looks of the old man, and a threatening gesture which he made as he advanced towards the cabinet, revealed a resolution so alarming that Madame de Lucenay caught him by the hand, stopped him, and said, in a low tone, with the most profound conviction, "He is innocent; I swear to you. Listen in silence."

The count stood still; he wished to believe what the duchess had said was true. She, on her part, was persuaded of his honesty. To obtain new sacrifices from this woman, so blindly generous — sacrifices which alone had saved him from the threats of Ferrand — the viscount had sworn to Madame de Lucenay, that dupe of a scoundrel from whom he had received in payment the forged draft, he ran the risk of being regarded as an accomplice of the forger, having himself put it in circulation. Madame de Lucenay knew that the viscount was imprudent, prodigal, and careless; but never for a moment had she supposed him capable of an infamous action, not even the slightest indiscretion. By twice lending him considerable sums under very peculiar circumstances, she had wished to render him a friendly service, the viscount only accepted this money on the express condition of returning it; for there was due to him, he said, more than twice this amount. His apparent luxurious manner of living allowed her to believe it. Besides, Madame de Lucenay, yielding to her natural kind impulses, had only thought of being useful to Florestan, without any care whether he could repay or not. He affirmed it, and she did not doubt. In answering for the honour of the viscount, in supplicating the old count to listen to the conversation of his son, the duchess thought that he was going to speak of the abuse of confidence, of which he had been a victim, and that he would be thus entirely exculpated in the eyes of his father.

"Once more," continued Florestan, in an agitated voice, "I say this Petit Jean is a scoundrel; he assured me that he had no other bills than those I withdrew yesterday, and three days ago. I thought this one was in circulation; it was only payable after three months, at Adams and Co's., London." "Yes, yes," said the clear and sharp voice of Badinot. "I know, my dear viscount, that you have adroitly managed your affairs; your forgeries were not to be discovered until you were far away. But you have been caught by those more cunning than yourself." "Ah, it is very well to tell me this, now, wretch that you are!" cried Florestan, furiously; "did you not, yourself, introduce this person to me, who has negotiated the bills?" "Come, my dear aristocrat," answered Badinot, coldly, "be calm. You are very skilful in

counterfeiting commercial signatures; it is really wonderful; but that is no reason why you should treat your friends with disagreeable familiarity. If you go on this way I leave you —arrange as you please." "Do you think one can preserve his sang froid in such a position? If what you tell me is true — if this complaint be lodged against me to-day — I am lost." "It is exactly as I tell you, unless you should have recourse, again, to that charming *Providence* with blue eyes." "That is impossible." "Then be resigned. It is a pity it was the last bill—and for twenty-five thousand paltry francs, to go and take the air of the south at Toulon—it is ridiculous, absurd, stupid! How could a cunning man like you suffer yourself to be thus cornered?" "Heavens! what is to be done? what is to be done? nothing that is here belongs to me; I have not twenty Louis of my own." "Your friends?" "Ah, I owe to all those who could lend me; do you think me such a fool as to have waited until to-day to ask them?" "That is true; pardon me; come, let us talk tranquilly, it is the best way to arrive at a reasonable solution. Just now I wanted to tell you how you were attacked by those who were more cunning than yourself. You did not listen to me." "Well; speak if it can be of any use." "Let us recapitulate. You said to me, about two months since, 'I have about a hundred and thirteen thousand francs, in bills, on different banking-houses, which have some time to run, can you find means to negociate them for me, my dear Badinot—'" "Well; what next?" "Stop! I asked to see these bills. A certain something told me that they were forgeries, although perfectly well done. I did not suspect that you, it is true, possessed a caligraphic talent so far advanced; but having the charge of your fortunes, ever since you had none, I knew you were completely ruined. I had drawn up the deed by which your horses, your carriages, the furniture of this hotel, belonged to Boyer and Edwards. It was not, then, wonderful for me to be astonished at seeing you possess commercial securities of so much value? Heiu!" "Do me the favour to spare me your astonishment, and let us arrive at the facts." "Here they are. I had thus not enough experience or timidity to care to meddle directly in affairs of that description; I recommended a third person to you, who, not

not less sharp-sighted than I am, suspected the game you wished to play." "That is impossible; he would not have discounted these bills if he had thought them false." "How much money did he give you for these 113,000 francs?" "Twenty-five thousand francs in cash, and the remainder in debts to be recovered." "And how much did you ever recover from these?" "Nothing, you know well enough; they were imaginary; but he certainly risked 25,000 francs." "How unfledged you are, my dear viscount! Having my commission of one hundred Louis to receive, I took good care not to tell this third person the real state of your affairs. He thought you still quite rich, and he knew, besides, that you were adored by a great lady, who was very rich, and who would never leave you in embarrassment; he was then pretty sure to get back what he advanced; he ran some risk, to be sure; but he also had a chance of making a great deal of money, and his calculation was a good one; for, the other day, you paid him 100,000 francs to withdraw the forgery of 58,000 francs, and yesterday, 30,000 for the second; for this last he had been contented with receiving its real value. How you procured these 30,000 francs yesterday may the devil run away with me if I know, for you are a man unique. So you see that at the end of the account, if Petit Jean forces you to pay the last draft for 25,000 francs, he will have received from you 155,000 francs for 25,000 francs which he paid you; now, I had reason to say that you were in the hands of those more cunning than yourself." "But why did he tell me that this last bill, which he presented to-day, was negotiated?"

"Not to alarm you, he also had told you that, with the exception of the 58,000 francs, the others were in circulation; the first one paid, yesterday came the second, and to-day the third." "The scoundrel!" Listen to me, then: *every one for himself*, as a celebrated lawyer said, and I like the maxim. But let us talk coolly; this proves to you that Petit Jean, allured by your first payments, speculates on this last bill, quite sure that your friends will not allow you to be dragged before the court of Assizes. It is for you to see if these friends are so well used, so drained that not another golden drop can be squeezed from them; for, if in three hours you have not the 25,000 francs, my noble viscount, you are caged." "If you were to repeat this for ever—" "Perhaps you would consent to pluck a last feather from this generous

duchess." "I repeat to you, it must not be thought of. To find in three hours 25,000 francs more, after all the sacrifices she has already made, it would be madness to think of it." "To please you, fortunate mortal, one would try an impossibility." "Ah! she has already tried it; this was to borrow 100,000 francs from her husband, and she succeeded; but these are experiments that cannot be tried twice. Let us see, my dear Badinot, until, now you have never had any reason to complain of me. I have always been generous; try to obtain some delay from this miserable Petit Jean. You know I always can find means to recompense those who serve me; this last affair once hushed, I will take a new flight—you shall be content with me." "Petit Jean is as inflexible as you are unreasonable." "I!" "Try only to interest once more your generous friend in your *sad* fate. The devil! tell her right out the truth; not as you have already said, that you are the dupe, but that you are the forger himself." "No, never will I make such an acknowledgment; it would be shame without any advantage." "Do you prefer that she should learn it to-morrow by the *Gazette des Tribunaux*?" "I have three hours left—I can fly." "And where will you go without money? Judge now! on the contrary, this last forgery taken up, you will find yourself in a superb position; you would have no more debts. Come, come, promise me to speak once more to the duchess. You are such a rake, you know how to make yourself so interesting in spite of your faults; at the very worst, perhaps, you will be esteemed the less, or even no more, but you will be lifted out of this scrape. Come, promise me to see your friend, and I will run to Petit Jean, and do my best to obtain an hour or two more." "Hell!" must I drink of shame to the very dregs!" "Come, now! good luck—be tender, charming, fond; I run to Petit Jean: you will find me here until three o'clock: later it will no longer be in time; the office of the king's procurator is closed after four o'clock." And Badinot took his departure. When the door was closed, Florestan was heard to cry, in profound despair, "Oh! my God! my God!" During this conversation, which unmasked to the count the infamy of his son, and to Madame de Lucenay the infamy of the man whom she had so blindly loved, both remained immovable, scarcely breathing, under the weight of this frightful revelation. It would be impossible to describe the mute eloquence of the sorrowful scene which passed between this young woman and the

count, when there was no longer any doubt of the crime of Florestan. Extending his arms towards the room where his son remained, the old man smiled with bitter irony, cast a withering look on Madame de Lucenay, and seemed to say to her,—"Behold him for whom you have braved all shame, made every sacrifice! behold him you have reproached me for abandoning!"

The duchess understood the look; for a moment she hung her head under the weight of her shame. The lesson was terrible. Then, by degrees, to the cruel anxiety which had contracted the features of Madame de Lucenay, succeeded a kind of noble indignation. The inexcusable faults of this woman were at least palliated by the fidelity of her love, by the boldness of her devotion, by the grandeur of her generosity, by the frankness of her character, and by her inexorable aversion to everything that was cowardly and dishonest.

Still too young, too handsome, too much sought after, to experience the humility of having been made use of, this proud and decided woman, once the illusion of love having vanished, felt neither hatred nor anger; instantaneously, without any transition, a mortal disgust, an icy disdain, killed her affection, until then so lively; it was no longer a woman deceived by her lover, but it was a woman of *haut ton* discovering that a man of her society was a cheat and a forger. In supposing even that some circumstances might have extenuated the ignominy of Florestan, Madame de Lucenay would not have admitted them; according to her views, the man who overstepped certain limits of honour, either through vice or weakness, *no longer existed in her eyes*, *honour* being for her a question of *existence* or *non*-existence. The only sorrowful feeling experienced by the duchess was excited by the terrible effect which this unexpected revelation produced on the count, her old friend. For some moments he appeared not to see nor hear; his eyes were fixed, his head hung down, his arms suspended, his paleness livid, and from time to time a convulsive sigh escaped from his bosom. With a man as resolute as he was energetic, such a state of dejection was more alarming than the most furious bursts of rage.

Madame de Lucenay looked at him with much anxiety. "Courage, my friend," said she to him, in a low tone: "I know what remains for me to do." The old man looked at her fixedly; then, as if he had been aroused from his stupor by some violent shock,

he raised his head, his features assumed a threatening appearance, and, forgetting that his son might hear him, he cried,—"And I, also—I know what I have to do."—"Who is there?" cried Florestan, surprised. Madame de Lucenay, fearing to meet the viscount, disappeared through the small door, and descended the private staircase. Florestan, having again demanded who was there, and receiving no answer, entered the saloon. The long beard of the old man changed him so much, and he was so poorly dressed, that his son, who had not seen him for many years, did not at first recognise him; he advanced rapidly towards him with a menacing air, and said, "Who are you? What do you want here?" "I am the husband of this woman!" answered the count, showing the portrait of Madame de Saint Remy. "My father!" cried Florestan, retreating in alarm; and he endeavoured to recall to mind the features so long forgotten. Erect, formidable, his looks irritated, his face purple with rage, his white hair thrown back, his arms crossed on his breast, the count, overawed, confounded his son, who, with his head down, dared not to raise his eyes upon him. Yet Saint Remy, from some secret motive, made a violent effort to remain calm and to conceal his feelings of resentment.

"My father!" said Florestan, in a faltering voice; "you were there?" "I was there!" "You have heard—" "All!" "Ah!" cried the viscount, mournfully, concealing his face in his hands. There was a moment's pause. Florestan, at first as much astonished as vexed at the unexpected apparition of his father, soon began to think what he could make out of this incident. "All is not lost," said he to himself; "the presence of my father is a stroke of fate. He knows all; he will not have his name dishonoured; he is not rich, but he must have more than 25,000 francs. Let us play close—address, emotion, and a little tenderness. I will let the duchess alone, and I am saved!" Then, giving to his charming features an expression of mournful dejection, moistening his eyes with the tears of repentance, assuming his most thrilling tones, his most pathetic manner, he cried, joining his hands with a gesture of despair, "Ah! my father! I am very unhappy! after so many years—to see you again, and at such a moment! I must appear so culpable to you! But deign to listen to me, I entreat you—I supplicate you to permit me, not to justify myself, but to explain to you my conduct: will you, my father?"

Saint Remy answered not a word; his features remained immovable; he seated himself in an arm chair, and with his chin resting on the palm of his hand, looked at the Viscount in silence.

If Florestan had known the thoughts which filled the mind of his father with hatred, fury, and vengeance, alarmed at the apparent calmness of the count, he would not have tried to dupe him. But ignorant of the suspicions attached to his birth, ignorant of the fault of his mother, Florestan doubted not the success of his trick, believing he had only to soften a father who, at once, a misanthrope and very proud of his name, would be capable, rather than see his name dishonoured, to decide on any sacrifice. "My father," he resumed, timidly, "permit me to try, not to exculpate myself, but to tell you how, from voluntary misleadings, I have reached, almost in spite of myself, actions—infamous—I acknowledge." The viscount took the silence of his father for a tacit consent, and continued:—"When I had the misfortune to lose my poor mother, who loved me so well—I was not twenty. I found myself alone, without counsel, without protection. Master of a considerable fortune, accustomed to luxury from my childhood, I had made it a habit, a want. Ignorant of the difficulty of earning money, I lavished it without measure. Unfortunately—and I say unfortunately, because this ruined me—my expenses, foolish as they were, by their elegance were remarkable. By good taste I eclipsed people who were ten times richer than I was. This first success intoxicated me. I became a man of luxury as one becomes a warrior or a statesman; yes, I loved luxury, not from vulgar ostentation, but I loved it as a painter loves a picture, as the poet loves poetry; like every other artist, I was jealous of my work; and my work was my luxury. I sacrificed everything to its perfection. I wished it fine, grand, complete, splendidly harmonious in everything, from my stables to my table, from my dress to my house. I wished in everything to be a model of taste and elegance. As an artist, in short, I was greedy of the applause of the crowd, and of the admiration of people of fashion; this success, so rare, I obtained." In speaking thus, the features of Florestan, lost by degrees their hypocritical expression, his eyes shone with a kind of enthusiasm; he told the truth; he had been at first reduced by this rather uncommon manner of understanding luxury. He looked inquiringly at his father; he thought he appeared rather softened. He resumed, with growing warmth, "Oracle and regulator of the

fashions, my praise or censure made the law: I was quoted, copied, extolled, admired, and that by the best company in Paris, that is to say, Europe—the world. The women partook of the general infatuation; the most charming disputed for the pleasure of coming to some very select fêtes which I gave, and every where, and always, nothing was heard but of the incomparable elegance and exquisite taste of these fêtes, which the millionaires could neither equal nor eclipse; in short, I was what one calls the King of fashion. This word will tell you all, my father." "I understand it, and I am sure that at the galleys you would invent some refined elegance in the manner of carrying your chain, that will become the *fashion* in the yard, and will be called à la Saint Remy," said the old man, with bitter irony; then he added, "And Saint Remy is *my name*!" It caused Florestan to exercise much control over himself to conceal the wound caused by this sarcasm. He continued in a more humble tone: "Alas! my father, it is not from pride that I recall the fact of this success; for, I repeat to you, this success ruined me. Sought after, envied, flattered, praised, not by interested parisites, but by people whose position much surpassed mine, and over whom I only had the advantage derived from elegance—which is to luxury what taste is to the arts—my head was turned; I did not calculate that my fortune must be spent in a few years; little did I heed it. Could I renounce this feverish, dazzling life, in which pleasures succeeded pleasures, intoxications of all sorts to enchantments of all sorts! Oh! if you knew, my father, what it is to be everywhere noticed as the hero of the day; to hear the whisperings which announce your entrance into a saloon; to hear the women say, 'It is he?' there he is! Oh! if you knew—" "I know," said the old man, interrupting his son, and without changing his position; "I know. Yes, the other day, in a public square, there was a crowd; suddenly I heard a noise, like that with which you are received when you go anywhere; then the looks of all, the women especially, were fixed on a very handsome young man, just as they are fixed on you, and they pointed him out, just as they do you, saying, 'It is he?—there he is!' just exactly as they say of you."

"But this man, my father?"—"Was a forger they were placing in the pillory." "Ah! exclaimed Florestan, with suppressed rage; then feigning profound affliction, he added, "My father, have you no pity—what can I say to you now? I do not seek to

deny my faults—I only wish to explain to you the fatal cause of them. Ah, well! yes, should you again overwhelm me with cruel sarcasms, I will try to go to the end of this confession—I will try to make you understand this feverish vanity which has ruined me, because then, perhaps, you will pity me. Yes, for one pities a fool—and I was a fool. Shutting my eyes, I abandoned myself to the dazzling vortex, into which I dragged along with me the most charming women, the most amiable men. Stop myself—could I do it? As well say to the poet who exhausts himself, and whose genius is consuming his health, 'Pause in the midst of the inspiration which carries you away!' No, I could not: I! abdicate this royalty which I exercised, and return, ruined, ashamed, mocked, to the state of a plebian—unknown; give this triumph to my rivals, whom I had until then defied, ruled, crushed! No, no, I could not! not voluntarily, at least. The fatal day came, when, for the first time, my money was wanting. I was as surprised, as if this moment never could happen. Yet I had still my horses, my carriages, and the furniture of this house. My debts paid, I should still have sixty thousand francs—perhaps—what should I do with this trifle? Then, my father, I took the first step in infamy. I was still honest. I had only spent what belonged to me: but then I began to contract debts which I could not pay. I sold all that I possessed to two of my people, in order to settle with them, and to be able, for six months longer, to enjoy this luxury which intoxicated me, in spite of my creditors. To provide for my wants at play and foolish expenses, I borrowed, in the first place from the Jews; then, to pay the Jews, from my friends. These resources exhausted, commenced a new era in my life. From an honest man, I had become a *chevalier d'industrie*, but I was not yet criminal. However, I hesitated. I wished to take a violent resolution. I had proved in several duels that I was not afraid of death. I thought I would kill myself!"

"Ah, bah! really?" said the count, ironically. "You do not believe me, my father." "It was too soon, or too late!" added the old man, quite immovable, and in the same attitude. Florestan, thinking he had alarmed his father in speaking to him of his project of suicide, thought it necessary to get up the scene again for a little stage effect. He opened a closet and took from it a little flacon of green crystal, and said to the count, in placing it on the mantlepiece; "An Italian quack sold me this poison." "And—

it was for yourself—this poison?" said the old man still leaning on his elbow.

Florestan understood the bearing of his father's words. His face now expressed real indignation, for he spoke the truth. One day, he had had a fantasy to kill himself—an ephemeral fantasy; people of his stamp are too cowardly to resolve coldly and without witnesses upon death, which they will boldly meet in a duel through a point of honour. He cried, then, in a tone of truth, "I have fallen very low, but at least not so low as that, my father! it was for myself I reserved the poison!" "And you were afraid?" said the count, without changing his position. "I confess it, I recoiled before this dreadful extremity; nothing was yet desperate; the persons whom I owed were rich, and could wait. At my age, with my relations, I hoped for a moment, if not to repair my fortune, at least to assure myself an honourable independent position in its place. Several of my friends, perhaps less capable than myself, had made rapid strides in diplomacy. I had only to request, and I was attached to the legation of Gerolstein. Unfortunately, some days after this nomination, a gambling debt contracted with a man I hated, placed me in a most cruel embarrassment. I had exhausted every resource. A fatal idea occurred to me. Believing myself certain of impunity, I committed an infamous action. You see, my father, I conceal nothing from you. I confess the ignominy of my conduct. I seek to extenuate nothing. One of two resolutions remain for me to take, and I have now to decide which. The first is to kill myself, and to leave your name dishonoured, for if I do not pay to-day, even the twenty-five thousand francs, the complaint is made, the affair known, and, dead or living, I am ruined. The second means is to throw myself into the arms of my father, to say to you, save your son, save your name from infamy, and I swear to leave to-morrow for Africa, to enlist for a soldier, and either to be killed or to return some day honourably re-instated. What I now tell you, my father, is true. In face of the extremity which overwhelms me, I have no other way. Decide; either I die covered with shame, or, thanks to you, I will live to repair my faults. These are not the threats and words of a young man, my father. I am now twenty-five years of age; I bear your name; I have courage enough either to kill myself, or to become a soldier, for I will not go to the galleys." The count arose. "I

will not have my name dishonoured," said he, coldly, to Florestan, "Ah, my father! my saviour!" cried the viscount, warmly; and he was about to throw himself into his arms, when he, with an icy gesture, calmed this eagerness. "They wait for you until three o'clock, at the house of this man who has the forgery?" "Yes, my father; and it is now two o'clock." "Let us pass into your cabinet; give me something to write with." "Here, my father." The count seated himself before the desk of his son, and wrote with a firm hand:—

"I engage to pay this night, at ten o'clock, the 25,000 francs which are owing by my son.

"Count de Saint Remy."

"Your creditor insists upon having the money; notwithstanding his threats, this engagement of mine will make him consent to a new delay; he can go to Mr. Dupont, banker in the Rue de Richelieu, who will inform him of the value of this note." "Oh, my father! how can ever—" "You may expect me to-night; at ten o'clock I will bring you the money. Let your creditor be here." "Yes, my father, and after to-morrow I start for Africa. You shall see if I am ungrateful! Then, perhaps, when I have re-instated myself, you will accept my thanks." "You owe me nothing; I have said my name shall be no farther dishonoured; it shall not be," said Saint Remy, calmly; and taking his cane, which he had placed on the bureau, he turned towards the door. "My father, your hand at least!" said Florestan, in a supplicating tone. "Here, to-night, at ten o'clock," replied the count, refusing his hand. And he departed.

"Saved!" cried Florestan, joyfully, "saved!" then, after a moment's reflection, he added, "saved! almost. No matter; so far good. Perhaps, to-night I will acknowledge the *other thing;* he is in train; he will not stop half way and let his first sacrifice be useless, because he refuses a second. Yet why tell him? Who will know it? Never mind; if nothing is discovered, I will keep the money that he will give me to pay this last *debt.* I had a great deal of trouble to move him, this devil of a man; the bitterness of his sarcasms made me doubt my success; but my threat of suicide, the fear of having his name dishonoured decided him; that was the lucky stroke. He is, doubtless, not so poor as he pretends to be, if he possesses a hundred thousand francs. He must have saved money, living as he does. Once more, I

say, his coming was a lucky chance. He has a cross look, but, at the bottom, I think he is a good fellow; but I must hasten to this lawyer."

"He rang the bell. Mr. Boyer appeared. "Why did you not inform me that my father was here? you are very negligent." "Twice I endeavoured to speak to you when you came through the garden with Mr. Badinot; but you, occupied with Mr. Badinot, made a motion with your hand not to be interrupted. I did not permit myself to insist. I should be deeply wounded if you could believe me guilty of negligence." "Very well; tell Edwards to harness immediately *Onion*—no—*Plower*, to the cabriolet." Boyer bowed respectfully: as he was about to retire some one knocked at the door. "Come in!" said Florestan; a second valet appeared, holding in his hand a small plate of silver gilt. Mr. Boyer took hold of the plate with a kind of jealous officiousness, and came and presented it to the viscount. Florestan took from it a rather voluminous envelope, sealed with black wax. The two valets retired ceremoniously. The viscount opened the package. It contained twenty-five thousand francs, in treasury notes, with no other information. "Decidedly, cried he, with joy, "the day is lucky—sacred! this time, completely saved. I shall go to the jeweller's; and yet, perhaps; no, let us wait, they can have no suspicion of me—twenty-five thousand francs are good to keep; I was a fool ever to doubt my star; at the moment it seems most obscured, does it not appear more brilliant than ever? But where does this money come from? the writing of the address is unknown to me; let me look at the seal; the cipher; yes, yes, I am not mistaken—an N. and an L.—it is Clothilde! How has she known!—and not a word—it is strange! How apropos! Oh! I reflect! I made a rendezvous for this morning; these threats of Badinot upset me. I have forgotten Clothilde; after having waited some time, she has gone. Doubtless this is sent as a delicate hint that she fears I shall forget her on account of my momentary embarrassments. Yes, it is an indirect reproach for not addressing myself to her as usual. Good Clothilde, always the same!—generous as a queen! What a pity to come again from her—still so handsome! Sometimes I regret it; but I have never asked her until at the last extremity; I have been forced to it." "Your cabriolet is ready," said Boyer.

"Who brought this letter?" "I am uninformed." "Exactly—I

will ask at the door; but tell me, is there no one in the rez-de-chaussée?" added the viscount, looking at Boyer in a significant manner. "There is no longer any one."

"I was not deceived," thought Florestan. "Clothilde has waited for me, and has gone away." "If you would have the goodness to grant me two minutes?" said Boyer. "Speak, and make haste." "Edwards and I have understood that the Duke du Montbrison was about to establish himself; if you would have the goodness to propose to let him have this house all furnished, as well as the stables, it would be a good occasion for us to dispose of all, and, perhaps, might also suit you." "You are right, Boyer; for myself, I should much prefer it. I will see Montbrison, and will speak to him about it. What are your conditions?" "You understand—we ought to try to profit as much as we can by your generosity." "And gain by your bargain? nothing can be plainer! Come, what is the price?" "For the whole, two hundred and sixty thousand francs." "How much do you gain, you and Edwards;" "About forty thousand francs." "Very pretty! However, so much the better; for, after all, I am satisfied with you, and if I had a will to make, I should have left this sum to you and Edwards." And he went out to go, in the first place, to his creditor, and then to Madame de Lucenay, whom he did not suspect of having overheard his conversation with Badinot.

CHAPTER VII.

THE INTERVIEW.

The Hotel de Lucenay was one of those princely habitations of the Faubourg Saint Germain which the waste ground renders so magnificent. A modern house could have been placed with ease in the space occupied by the staircase of one of these palaces; and an entire quarter of the ground they covered.

Towards nine o'clock of the evening of this same day, the enormous gate of this hotel was opened to a glittering cab, which, after having described a scientific curve in the immense court, stopped before a covered porch which led to a first antechamber. While the stampings of the two mettlesome horses resounded on the pavement, a gigantic footman opened the emblazoned door,

and a young man descended slowly from this brilliant vehicle, and not less slowly mounted the five or six steps of the porch. This young man was the Viscount Saint Remy. On leaving his creditor, who, satisfied with the engagement of the count, had granted the delay asked, and agreed to come to Rue Chaillot at ten o'clock, Florestan went to Madame de Lucenay to thank her for the new service she had rendered him; but, not having met the duchess in the morning, he came in great spirits, certain to find her at an hour she habitually reserved for him. From the obsequiousness of the two footmen of the ante-chamber, who ran to open the door as soon as they recognised the carriage of Florestan; from the profoundly respectful air with which the rest of the liveried servants spontaneously arose as the viscount passed, one could easily see that he was looked upon as the *second*, if not the real master of the mansion. When the Duke de Lucenay entered his house, his umbrella in his hand, and his feet cased in huge overshoes (he detested to ride in the day-time), the same domestic evolutions were repeated, and always respectfully; yet, to the eyes of an observer, there was a great difference of expression between the reception given to the husband, and that which was reserved for the lover. Never had Florestan been more conceited; never did he feel more easy—more sure of himself—more irresistible. The *victory* which he had gained in the morning over his father; the new proof of attachment from Madame de Lucenay; the joy at having so miraculously escaped from so cruel a position; his renewed confidence in his star, gave to his handsome face an expression of boldness and good-humour, which rendered him still more seducing. In short, he never was more pleased with himself; and he had reason.

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A last glance in a mirror completed the excellent opinion that Florestan had of himself. The valet opened the folding doors of the saloon, and announced, "The Viscount Saint Remy!"

The astonishment and indignation of the duchess were indescribable. She thought that the count must have told his son that she also had overheard all. We have said before, that, on learning the infamy of Florestan, the love of Madame de Lucenay was at once changed into utter disdain.

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Madame de Lucenay being engaged out that evening, was, al-

though *without diamonds*, dressed with her usual taste and magnificence: this splendid toilet; the rouge which she wore boldly; her beauty, quite striking at night; her figure resembling a goddess in the clouds, rendered still more striking a dignity, which no one possessed more than she did, and which she pushed, when it was necessary, to a most superlative haughtiness. The proud, determined character of the duchess is known to the reader; let him imagine her look, when the viscount, smiling, advanced towards her, and said in loving tones, "My dear Clothilde, how kind you are! how much you—" The viscount could not finish. The duchess was seated, and had not stirred; but her actions, the glance of her eye, revealed a contempt at once so calm and so withering, that Florestan stopped short. He could not say a word, or make one step in advance.

Never had Madame de Lucenay conducted herself thus towards him. He could not believe it to be the same woman whom he had always found so tender and affectionate. His first surprise over, Florestan was ashamed of his weakness; he resumed his habitual audacity; making a step towards Madame de Lucenay to take her hand, he said to her in the most caressing manner, "My God! Clothilde, how is this? I have never seen you so handsome, and yet—" "Ah! this is too impudent!" cried the duchess, recoiling with such unequivocal disgust and pride, that Florestan once more was surprised and confounded. However, assuming a little assurance, he said to her, "You will inform me at least, Clothilde; the cause of this sudden change? What have I done? What do you wish?" Without replying to him, Madame de Lucenay looked at him from head to foot, with an expression so insulting, that Florestan felt the flush of resentment mount to his forehead, and he cried, "I know, madame, you are habitually very hasty in your ruptures. Is it a rupture you wish?" "The pretension is curious!" said Madame de Lucenay, with a burst of sardonic laughter. "Know that when a lackey robs me—*I do not break with him*—I turn him out." "Madame!" "Let us put a stop to this," said the duchess, in a decided and haughty tone. "Your presence is repugnant to me! What do you want here? Have you not got your money?" "I was right then. I guessed it was you. These twenty-five thousand francs—" "Your last *forgery* is withdrawn, is it not? The honour of your family name is saved. It is well. Go away. Ah! believe—I much regret this money—it would have

succoured so many honest people ; but it was necessary to think of your father's shame and of mine." "Then, Clothilde, you know all? Oh ! look you now; nothing remains for me but to die," cried Florestan in the most pathetic and despairing tone. A burst of indignant laughter from the duchess replied to this tragical exclamation, and she added, between two fits of hilarity,— "My God ! I never would have thought that infamy could make itself so ridiculous !" "Madame !" cried Florestan, almost blind with rage.

The folding doors were thrown open suddenly, and a valet announced, "The Duke de Montbrison !" Notwithstanding his habitual self-command, Florestan could hardly restrain himself, which a man more accustomed to society than the duke would certainly have remarked.

The Duke de Montbrison was scarcely eighteen. Let the reader imagine the charming face of a young girl, fair, white, and red, whose rosy lips and smooth chin shall be slightly shaded with an incipient beard ; and to this, large, brown eyes, still slightly timid, a figure as graceful as that of the duchess, and he will have, perhaps, an idea of the appearance of this young duke.

The viscount had the weakness or the audacity to remain. "How kind you are, Conrad, to have thought of me to-night !" said Madame de Lucenay, in the most affectionate tone, extending her beautiful hand to the young duke, who hastened to shake hands with his cousin ; but Clothilde shrugged up her shoulders, and said to him gaily, "You may kiss them, cousin ; you wear your gloves." "Pardon me, cousin," said the youth ; and he pressed his lips on the charming hands she presented him.

"What are you going to do this evening, Conrad ?" demanded the duchess, without taking the least notice of Florestan. "Nothing, cousin ; when I leave here I am going to my club." "Not at all ; you shall accompany M. de Lucenay and me, to Madame de Senneval ; it is her night ; she has already asked me several times to present you."

"My cousin, I shall be too happy to place myself under your orders."

"And besides, frankly, I do not like to see you so soon accustom yourself to this taste for clubs ; you have every requisite to be perfectly well received and even sought after in society. So you must go oftener." "Yes ! cousin." "And as I am with you

pretty much on the footing of a grandmother, my dear Conrad, I am disposed to be very maternal. You are emancipated, it is true; but still I think you will have need for a long time of a tutor. And you must absolutely accept of me. "With joy, with delight, my cousin!" said the young duke with vivacity.

It is impossible to describe the mute rage of Florestan, who remained standing, leaning against the chimney-piece. Neither the duke nor Clothilde paid any attention to him. Knowing how quickly Madame de Lucenay decided on anything, he imagined that she pushed her audacity and contempt so far that she wished to play the coquette openly and before him with the young duke. It was not so: the duchess felt for her young cousin an affection quite maternal. But the young duke was so handsome, he seemed so happy at the gracious reception of his cousin, that Florestan was exasperated by jealousy, or rather by pride; his heart writhed under the cruel stings of envy, inspired by Conrad de Montbrison, who, rich and charming, entered so splendidly this life of pleasures, which he was leaving—he, ruined, despised, disgraced. Saint Remy was brave—with the bravery of the head, if we may so express it, which, through anger or vanity, causes one to face a duel; but, vile and corrupted, he had not that courage of the heart which triumphs over evil propensities, or which, at least, gives one the energy to escape infamy by a voluntary death. Furious at the sovereign contempt of the duchess, thinking he saw a successor in the young duke, Saint Remy resolved to match the insolence of Clothilde, and, if it were necessary, to seek a quarrel with Conrad. The duchess, irritated at the audacity of Florestan, did not look at him, and M. de Montbrison, in his attraction towards his cousin, forgetting the usages of society, had neither bowed nor said one word to the viscount, whom he knew perfectly. He advanced towards Conrad, whose back was turned towards him, touched his arm lightly, and said, in an ironical, and dry tone, "Good evening sir. A thousand pardons for not having perceived you before."

M. de Montbrison, feeling that he had been wanting in politeness, turned quickly, and said cordially, "I am confused, truly; but I dare hope that my cousin, who has caused this want of attention, will be pleased to make my excuses, and—"

"Conrad!" said the duchess, incensed at the conduct of

The meeting of the friends.

Florestan, who persisted to remain and brave her, "Conrad, it is right; no excuses; it is not worth the trouble." M. de Montbrison, believing that his cousin reproached him in a playful manner for being too formal, said gaily to the viscount, who was white with rage, "I shall not insist since my cousin forbids. You see her tutelage commences."

"And this tutelage will not stop there, my dear sir, be quite assured. Thus, in this view of the case (which Madame the Duchess will readily approve, I do not doubt), an idea has just struck me to make you a proposition." "To me?" said Conrad, beginning to dislike the sneering tone of Florestan. "To yourself. I leave in some days for the embassy of Gerolstein, to which I am attached. I wish to dispose of my house all furnished, and my stables; you also should make *an arrangement*," and the viscount emphasized these last words, looking at Madame de Lucenay. "It would be very 'piquant,' would it not, Madame la Duchess?" "I do not comprehend you," said M. de Montbrison, more and more astonished.

"I will tell you, Conrad, why you cannot accept the offer which has been made you," said Clothilde. "And why cannot he accept my offer, Madame la Duchess?" "My dear Conrad, that which is proposed to be sold to you, is already sold to others. You comprehend? You would have the inconvenience of being robbed as on the highway."

Florestan bit his lips with rage. "Take care, Madame," cried he. "How? threats here?" said Conrad. Come, now, Conrad, pay no attention," said Madame de Lucenay, taking a pastille with imperturbable sang froid. "A man of honour ought not, nor cannot commit himself with you. If he insist, I will tell you wherefore."

A terrible scene was perhaps about to take place, when the doors were again thrown open, and the Duke de Lucenay entered, and, according to custom, with much noise and disturbance. "How, my dear! are you ready?" said he to his wife, "Why, it is astonishing! why, it is surprising! Good-evening, Saint Remy; good-evening, Conrad. Ah! you see before you the most despairing of men; that is to say, I cannot sleep; I cannot eat; I am stupified; I cannot get used to it. Poor d'Harville! what an event!" And de Lucenay, throwing himself backwards, threw his hat from him with a gesture of despair, and

crossing his left leg over the right knee, he took his foot in his hand, continuing to utter exclamations of grief.

The emotions of Conrad and Florestan had time to be subdued before M. de Lucenay, the least observing man in the world, had time to perceive anything. Madame de Lucenay, not from embarrassment—she was not a woman to be untimely embarrassed—but the presence of Florestan was repugnant and insupportable, said to the duke, "When you are ready, we will go. I am to present Conrad to Madame de Senneval." "No, No!" cried the duke, abandoning his foot to seize a cushion, which he struck violently with his two fists, to the great alarm of Clothilde, who, at the unexpected cries of her husband, bounded from her chair. "My God! what is the matter?" said she. "You quite shock me." "No!" replied the duke; and, throwing down the cushion, he arose quickly, and began to walk about, violently gesticulating. "I cannot help thinking of poor d'Harville; and you, Saint Remy?"

"Truly, a frightful event!" said the viscount, who, with hatred and rage in his heart, sought the looks of Montbrison; but he, after the the last words of his cousin, not from want of courage, but from pride, turned away from a man so terribly debased.

"Pray," said the duchess to her husband, "do not regret M. d'Harville in a manner so noisy, and above all, so singular. Ring, if you please, for my servants." "Only think," said M. de Lucenay, seizing hold of the bell-pull, "three days ago he was full of life, and now, what remains of him? Nothing, nothing!" These last exclamations were accompanied by three pulls of the bell so violent that the cord broke which he held in his hand, separated from the upper spring, and fell upon the candelabra filled with wax lights, and overturned two; the one fell upon the mantlepiece, and broke a beautiful little vase of Sevres China; the other rolled on the ground, and set fire to a rug of ermine, which, for a moment in a blaze, was almost immediately extinguished by Conrad. At the same moment, two valets, summoned by the loud ringing, arrived in haste, and found M. de Lucenay with the bell-rope in his hand, the duchess laughing violently at this ridiculous array of candles, and Montbrison partaking the hilarity of his cousin. Saint Remy alone did not laugh.

M. de Lucenay, quite habituated to these kinds of accidents, preserved a serious countenance; he threw the rope to one of the servants, and said, "The carriage of Madame Clothilde." Becoming a little more calm, he cried, "Really, there is no one else in the world but yourself who could have caused a laugh at so lamentable an event."

"Lamentable! You may well say frightful! horrible! Now only see, since yesterday I have been thinking how many persons there are, even in my own family, whom I would rather should have died than poor d'Harville. My nephew Emberval, for instance, who is so tiresome with his stammering; or your aunt Merinville, who is always talking of her nerves, her blues, and who swallows every day, while waiting for her dinner, an abominable pork pie, just like a porteress. Do you think much of your aunt Merinville?" "Go along! you are crazy!" said the duchess, shrugging up her shoulders. "But it is true," answered the duke; "one would give a hundred indifferent persons for a friend. Is it not so, Saint Remy?" "Doubtless."

"The carriage of Madame the Duchess," said one of the servants. "Ah! well, but why do you not wear your diamonds?" said M. de Lucenay, unexpectedly; "with this dress they would look devilishly well!" Saint Remy shuddered.

"For one poor little time that we go out together," continued the duke, "you might have honoured me with your diamonds. They are really very handsome. Have you ever seen them, Saint Remy?" "Yes; he knows them perfectly well," said Clothilde. "Give me your arm, Conrad." M. de Lucenay followed the duchess with Saint Remy, who was almost beside himself with rage. "Are you not coming with us to the Senneval's?" said M. de Lucenay to him. "No; impossible," answered he, hastily. "Ah! now, Saint Remy, Madame de Senneval, there is another one—what do I say, one?—two—whom I would sacrifice willingly; for her husband is also on my list." "What list?" "Of those persons whom I would willingly see die, if poor d'Harville could have remained." While M. de Montbrison was assisting his cousin with her mantle, M. de Lucenay said to him,—"Since you are going with us, Conrad, order your carriage to follow ours, unless you will go, Saint Remy; then you can give me a place." "I thank you," said Florestan drily, "I cannot accompany you."

"Then, good-bye. Have you had a dispute with my wife? See, she is getting into the carriage without speaking to you!" "My cousin?" said Conrad, waiting through deference to the duke. "Get in, get in!" cried he; and stopping for a moment in the porch, he admired the equipage of the viscount. "Are these your sorrels, Saint Remy?" "Yes." "And your fat Edwards! Just see how he holds his horses in his hands! I must confess, here is no one but this devil of a Saint Remy who has the best of everything. "Madame de Lucenay and her cousin are waiting," said Florestan, with bitterness. "It is true, how rude I am! Adieu, Saint Remy. Ah! I forgot: if you have nothing better to do, come and dine with us to-morrow. Lord Dudley has sent me from Scotland some grouse and heath-cocks. Just imagine something monstrous. It is agreed, is it not?" And the duke joined his wife and Conrad.

Saint Remy remained alone, and saw the carriage depart; his own drew up, and as he took his seat he cast a look of rage, hatred, and despair on this house, where he had so often entered as a master and, which he now left, ignominiously driven away. "Home!" said he, roughly. "To the hotel!" said the footman to Edwards, shutting the door. The bitter and sorrowful thoughts of Florestan on his way home can easily be imagined.

As he entered, Boyer, who had waited for him at the lodge, said, "The count is up stairs; he awaits you." "It is well." "There is also a man there, a man to whom you have given an appointment at ten o'clock." "Well, well. Oh! what a soirée!" said Florestan, as he was going up stairs to meet his father, whom he found in the saloon, where the interview of the morning had taken place.

"A thousand pardons, my father, for not being here when you arrived; but I—" "The man who holds this forged bill, is he here?" "Yes, my father, he is below." "Send for him to come up." Florestan rang the bell, Boyer answered. "Tell Petit Jean to come here." "Yes, my lord;" and Boyer disappeared. "How kind you are, my father, to remember your promise!" "I always remember what I promise." "How grateful! How can I ever prove—" "I will not have my name dishonoured; it shall not be." "It shall not be! no; and it shall never be more, I swear to you, my father. The count looked at his son in a singular manner and repeated, "No, it shall never be more!" Then, with a sneering laugh, he added, "You are a conjurer!" "It is that I

read my resolution in my heart." The count made no reply, but walked up and down the room, with his hands in the pocket of his overcoat. "Petit Jean," said Boyer, introducing a man with a low and cunning expression of face.

"Where is the bill?" said the count. "Here it is, sir," said Petit Jean (a man of straw of Ferrand's), presenting it to the count. "Is that it?" said he to his son. "Yes, my father." The count drew from the pocket of his waistcoat twenty-five notes of one thousand francs each, handed them to his son, and said, "Pay!" Florestan paid, and took the bill with a profound sigh of satisfaction. Petit Jean placed the notes carefully in an old pocket book, and retired. Saint Remy went with him out of the room, while Florestan prudently tore up the bill.

"At least, the twenty-five thousand francs from Clothilde remain. If nothing is discovered, it is a consolation. But how she has treated me! Ah now, what can my father have to say to Petit Jean?" The noise of a key turned in the lock made the viscount shudder. His father re-entered; his pallor had increased. "I thought I heard some one lock the door of my cabinet, my father?" "Yes; I locked it." "You, my father! and why?" demanded Florestan, surprised. The count placed himself so that his son could not descend the private stairs which led to the 'rez-de-chaussée.' Florestan, alarmed, began to remark the sinister look of his father, and followed all his movements with anxiety. Without being able to explain it, he felt alarmed. "My father, what is the matter?" "This morning, on seeing me, your sole thought has been this—'My father will not have his name dishonoured; he will pay, if I can manage to make him believe in my assumed repentance.'" "Ah, can you think that—" "Don't interrupt me. I have been your dupe; you have neither shame, nor regret, nor remorse; you are rotten to the heart; you have never had an honest sentiment, you have not robbed as long as you had enough to satisfy your caprices; that is what is called probity by rich people of your stamp; then followed want of decency, then baseness, then crime—forgery. This is only the first period of your life; it is pure compared with that which awaits you." "If I did not change my conduct, I acknowledged it; but I will change, my father. I have sworn it to you." "You would not change." "But—" "You would not change. Driven from the society to which you have been

accustomed, you would soon become criminal, like the wretches with whom you would associate; a robber inevitably, and, if necessary, an assassin. There is your future life." "Assassin! I?" "Yes; because you are a coward." "I have fought duels, and I have proved—" "I tell you that you are a coward. You have preferred infamy to death! A day will come when you will prefer the impunity of your new crimes to the life of others. That cannot be; I arrive in time to save henceforth, at least, my name from public dishonour. It must be finished." "How, my father, finished! What do you mean to say?" cried Florestan, more and more alarmed at the expression of his father and his increasing paleness.

Suddenly some one knocked violently at the door of the cabinet; Florestan made a movement, as if to open it, but his father seized him with an iron hand, and withheld him. "Who knocks?" demanded the count. "In the name of the law, open, open!" said a voice. "This forgery was not, then, the last?" said the count, in a low voice, looking at his son with a terrible scowl. "Yes, my father; I swear it," answered Florestan, trying in vain to release himself from the hold of his father.

"In the name of the law, open!" repeated the voice. "What do you want?" demanded the count. "I am a commissary of police. I come to make a search, on account of a robbery of diamonds, of which Saint Remy is accused. Mr. Baudoin, jeweller, has the proofs. If you do not open, I shall be obliged to break in the door." "A robber already! I was not deceived," said the count, in a low tone. "I came to kill you; I delayed too long." "To kill me!" "My name is enough dishonoured. Let us finish; I have two pistols here—you are going to blow out your brains, otherwise I will do it for you, and I will say you killed yourself to escape shame." And the count, with frightful sang froid, drew from his pocket a pistol, and with his disengaged hand he gave it to his son, saying, "Come, proceed, if you are not a coward."

After new and fruitless efforts to escape from the hands of the count, his son fell backward, overcome with fright, and pale with horror. From the terrible and inexorable looks of his father, he saw there was no pity to expect from him.

"My father!" he cried. "You must die!" "I repent!" "It is too late! Do you hear? They will break down the

door!" "I will expiate my faults!" "They are going to enter! I must, then, kill you!" "Pardon!" "The door will give way. You will have it so!" And the count placed the barrel of the pistol against the breast of his son. The viscount saw that he was lost. He took a sudden and desperate resolution; no longer struggling with his father, he said with firmness and resignation, "You are right, my father; give me this pistol. There is infamy enough attached to my name; the life that awaits me is frightful, it is not worth contending for. Give me the pistol. You shall see if I am a coward. And he extended his hand. "But, at least, a word, one single word of consolation, of pity, of farewell," said Florestan. His trembling lips, his ashy paleness, evinced the emotion of his trying situation. "If this should be my son," thought the count, hesitating to give him the instrument, "if this be my son, I ought still less to hesitate at this sacrifice." The door of the cabinet was broken in with a tremendous crash. "My father! they come! oh! I feel now that death is a benefaction. Thanks, thanks! but, at least, your hand, and pardon me." Notwithstanding his firmness, the count could not prevent a shudder, and said, in a broken voice, "I pardon you." "My father, the door opens; go to them; do not let them suspect you, at least. And then, if they enter here, they will prevent me from finishing. Adieu."

The footsteps of several persons were heard in the adjoining apartment. Florestan pointed the pistol to his heart. It was discharged at the moment when the count, to escape this horrible scene had turned away, and rushed out of the room, the curtains closing after him. At the noise of the explosion, at the sight of the count, pale and trembling, the commissary stopped suddenly at the threshold of the door, making a sign for his officers not to advance. Informed by Badinot that the viscount was closeted with his father, the magistrate at once comprehended everything, and respected his great sorrows. "Dead!" cried the count, concealing his face in his hands; "dead!" repeated he, overwhelmed. "It was right; better death than infamy; but it is frightful!" "My lord," said the magistrate, sadly, after a few moments' silence, "spare yourself a sorrowful spectacle; leave this house. Now there remains for me a duty to perform, still more painful than that which brought me here." "You are right said Saint Remy. "As to the victim of the robbery, you

can tell him to call at Mr. Dupont's, banker." "Rue de Richelieu. He is well known," answered the magistrate. "At what amount are the stolen diamonds estimated?" "At about 30,000 francs; the person who bought them, and through whom the robbery was discovered, gave that amount for them to your son." "I can yet pay this. Let the jeweller call the day after to-morrow on my banker; I will settle with him."

The commissary bowed, and the count departed. As soon as he was gone, the magistrate, profoundly touched at this unexpected scene, turned towards the saloon, the curtains of which were down. He raised them with emotion. "Nobody!" cried he, astonished, looking round the room, and not seeing the least trace of the tragic event which was supposed to have occurred. Then, remarking the small door in the tapestry, he ran thither. It was locked on the other side. "A trick," cried he, in a rage; "he has undoubtedly made his escape in this way." And, in fact, the viscount, before his father, pointed the pistol at his heart, but he had, afterwards very dexterously discharged it under his arm, and immediately fled.

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Notwithstanding the most active researches in all parts of the house, he was no where to be found. During the conversation between his father and the commissary, he had rapidly gained the boudoir, thence the conservatory, the back street, and finally reached the Champs Elysées.

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This is a sad picture of degradation in the higher classes. We know it. But, for want of instruction, the rich have, also, fatally, their wants, their vices, and their crimes. Nothing is more common, and more lamentable, than the insensate prodigalities that we have just described, and which always bring in their train, ruin, turpitude, infamy, or shame. It is a deplorable, fatal spectacle. Doubtless, inheritance, property, are and ought to be inviolably sacred.

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THE MYSTERIES OF PARIS.

PART VII.

CHAPTER I.

THE ADIEUX.

THE morning after these last-mentioned events, a touching scene took place at Saint Lazare, at the hour of the recreation of the prisoners.

On this day, during the promenade of her companions, Fleur de Marie was seated on a bench near the basin, already called the *bench of La Goualeuse.* By a sort of tacit agreement, the prisoners abandoned this place, which she loved, for the sweet influence of the young girl had much increased. The Goualeuse preferred this seat near the basin, because the moss which grew around the border of the reservoir recalled to her mind the verdure of the fields, and even the limpid water with which it was filled made her think of the little river of the village of Bouqueval. To the sad gaze of a prisoner, a tuft of grass is a meadow, a flower is a garden.

Confiding in the kind promises of Madame d'Harville, Fleur de Marie had been expecting, for two days, to leave Saint Lazare. Although she had no reason for inquietude at the delay, the young girl, from her habitual misfortunes, hardly dared to hope soon for freedom. At this moment, Madame Armand, the inspectress, entered the court. After having sought for Fleur de Marie with her eyes, she came to her with a satisfied and smiling air. "Good news, my child!" "What do you say, Madame?" cried La Goualeuse, rising. "Your friends have not forgotten you; they have obtained your liberty. The director has just received the notice." "Can it be possible, madame! ah! what happiness, mon Dieu!" And the emotion of Fleur de Marie was so violent, that she turned pale, put her hand to her heart, which beat violently, and fell back on her seat. "Calm yourself, my child," said Madame Armand, kindly: "happily such shocks

are without danger." "Ah! Madame, how grateful I ought to be!" "It is, doubtless, Madame d'Harville who has obtained your liberty. There is an old lady who is charged to conduct you to your friends. Wait for me; I will return for you; I have a few words to say in the work-room." It would be difficult to describe the expression of deep grief which spread over the features of Mont Saint Jean, on learning that her good angel saviour was to leave Saint Lazare.

Notwithstanding her joy at leaving the prison, Fleur de Marie could not suppress a shudder at the remembrance of La Chouette and the Brigand; recollecting that these two monsters had made her swear not to inform her benefactors of her sad fate. On learning that Fleur de Marie was pardoned, the other prisoners expressed their joy; some of them surrounded her, and bade her farewell in a cordial manner, congratulating her frankly on her quick deliverance from prison.

When she had left the prison buildings under the conduct of the inspectress, the latter said to her, "Now, my child, go to the wardrobe, where you will leave your prison garments, and resume the peasant's costume, which from its rustic simplicity, becomes you so well; adieu. You go to be happy, for you go under the protection of worthy people, and you leave this house never to return. But—hold—I am not reasonable," said Madame Armand, whose eyes were bathed in tears; "it is impossible for me to conceal from you how much I am already attached to you, poor child!" Then, seeing Fleur de Marie much affected, she added, "You do not wish me thus to sadden your departure?"

"Ah! Madame, is it not to your recommendation that this young lady, to whom I owe my liberty, interested herself in my fate?" "Yes, and I am happy at what I have done; my presentiments have not deceived me." At this moment a bell rang. "Ah! this is the signal for them to resume their work; I must go in. Adieu! once more adieu, my dear child!" And Madame Armand, quite as much affected as Fleur de Marie, embraced her tenderly; she then said to one of the atttendants, "Conduct Mademoiselle to the wardrobe."

A quarter of an hour afterwards, Fleur de Marie, clothed as a peasant, as we have seen her at the farm of Bouqueval, entered the office, where Madame Seraphin awaited her. This

woman, housekeeper of Ferrand, came to take the unfortunate child to the island of the ravageur.

CHAPTER II.

SOUVENIRS.

The Notary had easily and promptly obtained the liberty of Fleur de Marie. Instructed by La Chouette of her sojourn at Saint Lazare, he had immediately addressed himself to one of his clients, an honourable and influential man, telling him that a young girl, led astray, but sincerely repentant, and recently confined at Saint Lazare, ran the risk, from contact with the other prisoners, of having her good resolutions weakened. This young girl had been strongly recommended to him by some respectable people, who would take charge of her as soon as she left the prison. Ferrand had added, he begged his all-powerful client, in the name of morality, and of religion, to solicit her discharge. Finally, the notary, so as to completely conceal his part in the transaction, had particularly requested his client not to name him in the accomplishment of this good work; this wish, attributed to his philanthropic modesty, was scrupulously observed; the release of Fleur de Marie was demanded and obtained solely in the name of the client, who, as soon as it was received, sent it to Ferrand, that he might address it to the protectors of the young girl.

Madame Seraphin on giving this order to the directors of the prison, added that she was charged to conduct La Goualeuse to her friends. From the excellent account given by the inspectress, to Madame d'Harville, no one doubted that she owed her freedom to the Marchioness. Thus the notary's housekeeper could in no way excite the suspicions of her victim. Madame Seraphin had, as occasion required, the air of a good woman; it required very close observation to remark something insidious, false, and cruel in her crafty look, her hypocritical smile. In spite of her profound wickedness, which had made her the accomplice or confidant of her master's crimes, Madame Seraphin could not help being struck with the touching beauty of this young girl, delivered by herself, when quite a child, to La Chouette, and whom she was then about to conduct to certain death.

"Well, my dear girl," said she, in honeyed tones, "you must be delighted to get out of prison." "Oh! yes, Madame; and, doubtless, I owe my deliverance to the protection of Madame d'Harville, who has been so kind to me?" "You are not mistaken. But come, we are rather late, and we have got a long road to travel." "We are going to the farm of Bouqueval, to Madame Georges, is it not so, Madame?" cried La Goualeuse. "Yes, certainly, we are going to the country—to Madame Georges," said the housekeeper, to drive away every suspicion from the mind of Fleur de Marie; then she added, with malicious good-nature, "But this is not all; before you see Madame Georges a little surprise awaits you: come, come, our hack is below. What delight you must feel at leaving this place, dear girl. Come, let us go." And Madame Seraphin descended with La Goualeuse, followed by an officer to open the doors. The last one was closed on the two females, and they found themselves under the large porch which faces on the Rue du Faubourg Saint Denis, when they met a young girl who was coming, doubtless to visit a prisoner. It was Rigolette. Rigolette is always neat and coquettish. A little plain cap, very clean, and trimmed with cherry-coloured ribands, which harmonized wonderfully with her jet-black hair, surrounded her pretty face; a very white collar was turned over her long brown tartan. She carried on her arm a straw basket, and, thanks to her neat and graceful manner of walking, her thick-soled shoes were of marvellous cleanliness.

"Rigolette!" cried Fleur de Marie, at once recognising her former companion in prison, and in her rural excursions. "La Goualeuse!" exclaimed the grisette in her turn. And the two girls threw themselves into each other's arms. Nothing could be more enchanting than the contrast between these two young creatures of sixteen tenderly embracing, both so charming, and yet so different in expression and beauty. The one blonde, with large, blue, melancholy eyes, and a profile of angelic pureness; the other a lively brunette, with round and rosy cheeks, pretty black eyes, a charming picture of youth and gaiety, a rare and touching example of happiness in indigence, of virtue in destitution, and of joy in industry.

After an exchange of their mutual caresses, the two young girls looked at each other. Rigolette was joyful at the rencounter, Fleur de Marie confused.

The sight of her friend recalled to her mind the few days of calm enjoyment which had preceded her first degradation. "It is you; what happiness!" said the grisette. "What a delightful surprise! it is so long since we have seen one another!" answered La Goualeuse. "Ah! now I am no longer astonished at not having met you for six months," remarked Rigolette, observing the rustic clothes of La Goualeuse; "you live in the country?" "Yes, for some time," said Fleur de Marie, casting down her eyes. "And you come, like me, to see some one in prison?" "Yes; I come—I come to see some one," answered Fleur de Marie, stammering and blushing with shame. "And you are returning home, far from Paris, without doubt? Dear little Goualeuse, always good, I recognise you there. Do you remember the poor woman to whom you gave your mattress, linen, and the small amount of money you had, which we were about to spend in the country? for then you were crazy after the country, you village girl." "And you, you did not like it much, Rigolette. How kind you were, for it was on my account you went." "And for mine also; for you, who were always a little serious, you became so contented, so gay, so lively, once in the midst of the fields or woods; if it were only to see you there, it was pleasure to me. But let me look at you again. How this little round cap becomes you. How pretty you look. Decidedly, it was your vocation to wear a peasant's cap, and it was mine to wear the grisette's. Now you are according to your wishes; you must be happy; it does not surprise me. When I did not see you any more, I said to myself, this good little Goualeuse is not made for Paris; she is a real flower of the forest, and these flowers cannot live in the *capital;* the air is not good enough for them. Thus La Goualeuse has got a place with some good people in the country; this is what you have done, is it not?" "Yes," said Fleur de Marie, blushing.

"Only, I have a reproach to make you." "To me?" "You should have advised me; one does not leave in this way from one day to another, or, at least, without sending some word."

"I—I left Paris so quick," said Fleur de Marie, more and more confused, "that I could not." "Oh! I did not wish it; I am too happy to see you again. In truth, you did right to leave Paris, it is so difficult to live here quietly, without reckoning that a poor girl, isolated as we are might turn to evil without wishing

it. When one has nobody to advise with, one has so few means of defence; the men make such fine promises, and then, marry, sometimes poverty is so hard. Hold! do you remember the little Julie, who was so pretty, and Rosine, the blonde, with black eyes?" "Yes, I recollect them." "Well! my poor Goualeuse, they have both been deceived, then abandoned, and, finally, from misfortune to misfortune, they have fallen to be the wretched women, such as are shut up here." "Ah! mon Dieu?" cried Fleur de Marie, who held down her head and became purple with shame. Rigolette, deceived as to the sense of the exclamation of her friend, resumed: they are culpable, despicable even, if you wish, I grant this; but look here, my good Goualeuse, because we have had the happiness to remain virtuous; *you*, because you have gone to live in the country; I, because I had no time to lose with lovers: that I preferred my birds to them, and, all my pleasure was to have a nice little room; we must not be too severe upon others. Who knows but that deceit, poverty, and circumstances, may not have had a great deal to do with the bad conduct of Rosine and Julie, and if in their place we should not have done as they have done."

"Oh!" said Fleur de Marie, bitterly, "I do not accuse them, I pity them." Come, come, we are in a hurry, my dear girl," said Madame Seraphin, offering her arm to her victim, impatiently. "Madame, let us have a few moments more; it is so long a time since I have seen my poor Goualeuse," said Rigolette. "It is very late, girls, already three o'clock, and we have a long way to go," answered Madame Seraphin, very much annoyed at this meeting; but she added, "I will give you ten minutes longer." "And you, said Fleur de Marie, taking the hand of her friend in her own; "you have such a happy disposition! Are you always gay? always contented?" "I was, until a few days past, contented and joyous; but now—" "You have sorrows."

"Ah! yes, you know me, I am not changed, but unfortunately, everybody is not like me; and as others have their troubles, that causes me to have some." "Always kind."

"What would you have? Now just imagine I came here for a poor girl, a neighbour, who is accused wrongfully, and who is much to be pitied; she is called Louise Morel; she is the daughter of an honest workman who has become crazy from his

"

At the name of Louise Morel, one of the victims of the notary, Madame Seraphin shuddered and looked at Rigolette attentively. The face of the grisette was absolutely unknown to her; nevertheless, from that moment she paid great attention to the conversation of the young girls. "Poor thing," replied the Goualeuse, "how happy she must be that you do not forget her in her trouble!" "This is not all—it is a fatality; just as you see me, I have come a great distance; and still from another prison; but a prison for men." "You?" "Ah! yes, I have another very sad subject. Thus you see my basket," (and she showed it) "it is divided in two: each one has a side; to-day I bring Louise a little linen, and just now I carried something to poor Germain; my prisoner is called Germain. Hold! I cannot think of what has just passed between us without having a desire to weep; it is foolish; I know it is of no use, but, indeed, it is my nature." "And why do you feel like weeping?" "Only think that Germain is so unfortunate as to be associated with all the prison rogues; it quite overcomes him; he has a taste for nothing, eats nothing, and is growing thinner every day. I saw that, and I said to myself, 'he is not hungry; I will make him a nice little dainty bit, which he liked so much when he was my neighbour; that will give him an appetite.' When I say a dainty bit, understand me, it was just some fine yellow potatoes, mashed up with a little milk and sugar; I filled a pretty cup with it, and just now I took it to him in prison, telling him that I had prepared this myself, as I used to do in our happy days—you understand; I thought, perhaps, I could thus induce him to eat; ah, truly—" "How?" "That caused him to weep, when he saw the cup in which I had so often taken my milk before him; he burst into tears; and, more than the bargain, I finished by doing as he did, although I tried all I could to prevent it; you see my luck. I thought I was doing good; consoling him, and I made him more sad than before." "Yes, but those tears must have been so sweet to him." "All the same; I should have preferred to console him differently; but I speak of him without telling you who he is; he was an old neighbour of mine, the most honest lad in the world, as gentle and timid as a young girl, and whom I loved as a comrade, as a brother." "Oh! then, I can imagine that his sorrows are yours." "Is it not so? But you will see what a good heart he has. When I left him, I asked, as I always do, for his commis-

sions, saying to him, with a laugh, just to raise his spirits a little, that I was his little housekeeper, and that I should be very exact very active, to keep his custom. Then he, trying to smile, asked me to bring him one of the romances of Walter Scott, which he used to read to me in the evenings when I worked. This romance is called—'Ivanhoe;' I liked this book so much, that he read it to me twice. Poor Germain! he was so obliging!" "It is a souvenir of the happy days gone by that he wished to have.' "Certainly; since he begged me to go to the same library, not to hire, but to buy the volumes we used to read together; yes, to buy them; and you may judge it is a sacrifice for him, for he is as poor as we are." "Excellent heart!" said the Goualeuse, quite affected. "There! you are as much moved as I was, when he gave me this commission, but, you comprehend, the more I felt a desire to weep, the more I tried to laugh; for to weep twice in a visit made expressly to enliven him, was too much. Thus, to drive this gloom away, I recalled to his mind the droll story of a Jew, one of the characters of this romance, which formerly had so much amused us. But the more I talked, the more he looked at me with the big, big tears in his eyes. Marry, it touched my heart. I had restrained my tears for a quarter of an hour; I ended by doing as he did. When I left him he was sobbing; and I said to myself, furious at my stupidity, 'If this is the way I cheer and console him, it is hardly worth while to go and see him; I who promised myself to make him laugh! It is astonishing how I have succeeded!"

At the name of Germain, Madame Seraphin redoubled her attention.

"And what has this young man done to be in prison?" asked Fleur de Marie. "He!" cried Rigolette, whose compassion gave place to indignation; he is persecuted by an old monster of a notary, who is also the denouncer of Louise." "Of Louise, whom you came here to see?" "The same. She was the servant of the notary, and Germain was his cashier. It would be too long a story to tell you of what they unjustly accuse this poor boy. But what is quite sure is, that this bad man is much enraged with these two unfortunates, who have never injured him. But patience —patience; every one has his turn."

Rigolette pronounced these last words with an expression which made Madame Seraphin uneasy. Engaging in the con-

versation, instead of remaining quiet, she said to Fleur de Marie, in a wheedling manner, "My dear girl, it is late; we must go; we are waited for. I can well comprehend what interests you, for I, who do not know this young girl and this young man, am much affected. Oh! is it possible people can be so wicked! and what is the name of this bad notary of whom you speak?" Rigolette had no reason to be suspicious of Madame Seraphin; nevertheless, remembering the recommendations of Rodolphe, who had enjoined on her the greatest reserve on the subject of the secret protection which he granted to Germain and Louise, she regretted she had suffered herself to say, "Patience, every one has his turn." "This bad man is called Ferrand, Madame," answered Rigolette, adding, very adroitly, to repair her slight indiscretion, "And it is so much the more wicked in him to persecute Louise and Germain thus, as they have no one to interest themselves in their behalf except me, who can be of no use to them." "What a pity!" said Madame Seraphin. "I had hoped the contrary when you said '*But Patience,*' I thought that you reckoned on some protector to sustain these two unfortunates against this wicked notary." "Alas! no, madame," answered Rigolette, in order to completely lull the suspicions of Madame Seraphin. "Who would be generous enough to take the part of these two poor young folks against a rich and powerful man like Ferrand?" "Oh, there are hearts generous enough for that!" cried Fleur de Marie, after a moment's reflection; and with constrained warmth. "Yes. I know some one who makes it a duty to protect those who suffer and defend them; for he of whom I speak is as charitable to honest people as he is formidable to the wicked." Rigolette looked at the Goualeuse with astonishment, and was on the point of saying (thinking of Rodolphe) that she also knew some one who courageously took the part of the weak against the strong; but always faithful to the requests of her neighbour, she answered Fleur de Marie, "Really? you know some one generous enough to come to the aid of the poor?" "Yes. And although I have already implored his pity, his benevolence for other persons, I am sure if he knew the unmerited misfortunes of Louise and Germain, he would save them and punish their persecutor; for his justice and goodness are inexhaustible." Madame Seraphin looked at her victim with surprise. "This little girl would be still more dangerous than we thought,"

said she to herself. "If I had taken pity on her, what she has just said would render the *accident* inevitable which will rid us of her."

"My good little Goualeuse, since you have such a good acquaintance, I beg you will recommend my Louise and my Germain to him, for they do not deserve their fate," said Rigolette, thinking that her friends might gain by having two defenders instead of one. "Be tranquil: I promise you to do what I can for your protegées with M. Rodolphe," said Fleur de Marie. "M. Rodolphe!" cried Rigolette, strangely surprised.

"Certainly," said La Goualeuse. "M. Rodolphe! a travelling clerk!" "I do not know what he is. But why this astonishment?" "Because I know a M. Rodolphe also." "Perhaps it is not the same." "Let us see, yours—how is he? Young?" "Exactly." "A face full of nobleness and goodness." "That's it! just like mine," said Rigolette, more and more surprised; and she added, "Is he dark? Has he small moustaches?" "Yes."

"Is he tall and slender, fine figure, and an air uncommon for a travelling clerk? Does yours look just so?" "Without doubt, it is he," answered Fleur de Marie; "what is strange is that you think him a travelling clerk." "As to that, I am sure of it; he told me so." "You know him?" "I know him! he is my neighbour." "M. Rodolphe?" "He has a chamber on the fourth floor, alongside of mine." "He!"

"What is so astonishing in all this? it is very simple: he only earns fifteen or eighteen hundred francs a year; he can only hire a modest room, although he has very little regularity about him, for he does not know what his clothes cost him, my dear." "No no; it is not the same" said Fleur de Marie reflecting. "Ah! yours then is a phœnix for order?" "He of whom I speak, do you see, Rigolette, said Fleur de Marie, with enthusiasm, "is all-powerful;" his name is only pronounced with love and veneration; his appearance is imposing, and one is almost tempted to kneel before his grandeur and his goodness." "Then I am at fault, my poor Goualeuse; I say as you do, it is not the same; for mine is neither all-powerful nor imposing. He is a very good man, very lively, and no one kneels before him—just the contrary; for he has promised to help me wax my floor, and take me a walk on Sunday. You see he is no great lord. But what am I thinking about? I have truly the heart for a walk! And Louise and my poor Ger-

main! as long as they are in prison, there can be no pleasure for me."

For some moments Fleur de Marie reflected profoundly: she recalled to her mind that when she first saw Rodolphe at the *tapis-franc*, he had the appearance and language of the guests of the Ogresse. Might he not play the part of a travelling clerk with Rigolette? What could be the object of this new transformation? The grisette, seeing the pensive air of Fleur de Marie, said: "There is no use of cracking your head on this account, my good Goualeuse, we shall soon find out if we know the same M. Rodolphe; when you see yours, speak to him of me; when I see mine, I will speak to him of you. In this way we can satisfy ourselves at once." "And where do you live, Rigolette?" "In the Rue du Temple, No, 17."

"Now this is strange, and worth remembering," said Madame Seraphin to herself, having attentively listened to this conversation. "This M. Rodolphe, mysterious and all-powerful personage, who doubtless makes himself pass for a clerk, occupies a room adjoining that of this little work-girl, who knows more than she chooses to say. Good, good; if the grisette and the pretended clerk meddle with what does not concern them, we know where to find them." "When I have spoken to M. Rodolphe, I will write you," said La Goualeuse; "and I will give you my address, so that you can answer; but repeat your address, I fear I shall forget it." "Here, I have one of my cards that I leave at my customers;" and she gave Fleur de Marie a little card, on which was written, in magnificent italics, *Mademoiselle Rigolette, Dress-maker, Rue du Temple, No.* 17. "It is just as if it were printed, is it not?" added the grisette. "It was poor Germain who wrote them for me—he was so kind, so thoughtful. Now look you, it seems as if it were done purposely; one would say I never found out his good qualities until he was unfortunate, and now I am always reproaching myself for having put off so long loving him."

"You love him then?" "Ah! yes. I must have a pretext to go and see him in prison. Confess that I am a strange girl!" said Rigolette, stifling a sigh, and laughing through her tears. "You are as good and generous as ever," said Fleur de Marie pressing tenderly the hands of her friend. Madame Seraphin had doubtless heard enough of the conversation of the young girl,

for she said almost roughly to Fleur de Marie, "Come come my dear girl, let us go, here is a quarter of an hour lost." "What a surly look this old woman has! I don't like her face," whispered Rigolette to Fleur de Marie. Then she added, aloud, "When you come to Paris, my good Goualeuse, do not forget me: your visit will give me so much pleasure! I shall be so happy to pass a day with you, to show you my house-keeping, my room, my birds! I have birds—it is my luxury."

"I will try to come and see you, but I will certainly write. Come, adieu, Rigolette, adieu. If you knew how happy I am to have met you!" "And so am I, but—this shall not be the last time, I hope; and then I am so impatient to know if your Rodolphe is the same as mine. Write me soon on this subject, I entreat you."

"Yes, yes. Adieu, Rigolette." "Adieu, my good little Goualeuse;" and the two young girls embraced each other tenderly, concealing their emotion. Rigolette entered the prison to see Louise, and Fleur de Marie got into a hack with Madame Seraphin, who ordered the coachman to go to the Batignolles, and to stop at the barrier. A cross road led, from this place almost in a straight line to the banks of the Seine, not far from the island of the Ravageur. Fleur de Marie being unacquainted with Paris, did not perceive that the carriage was driven on a different road from that to Saint Denis. It was only when the vehicle stopped at the Batignolles that she said to Madame Seraphin, who invited her to get out, "But it seems to me, madame, that this is not the road to Bouqueval; and then, how can we go from hence to the farm on foot?"

"All I can say to you, my dear girl," answered the housekeeper, "is, that I execute the orders of your benefactors, and that you would cause them much trouble if you hesitate to follow me." "Oh! madame, do not think it," cried Fleur de Marie; "you are sent by them—I have no question to ask—I follow you blindly; only tell me if Madame Georges is well." "She is perfectly so." "And—M. Rodolphe." "Perfectly well also." "You know him, then, madame; but just, now when I spoke of him with Rigolette, you said nothing." "Because I must say nothing—I have my orders." "Did he give them to you?" "Isn't she curious, the dear girl," said the housekeeper laughing.

"You are right; pardon my questions, madame. Since we

go on foot to the place to which you conduct me," added Fleur de Marie sweetly, "I shall know that which I so much desire to know." "In fact, my dear girl, before a quarter of an hour we shall have arrived."

The housekeeper having left behind her the last houses of the Batignolles, followed with Fleur de Marie, a grassy footpath. The day was calm and beautiful, the sky towards the west half concealed by red and purple clouds; the sun, beginning to decline, cast his oblique rays on tbe heights of Colombe, on the other side of the Seine. As Fleur de Marie drew near the banks of the river, her pale cheeks became slightly coloured: she inhaled with delight the sharp pure air of the country. Her beautiful face expressed a satisfaction so calm and holy, that Madame Seraphin said to her, "You seem well contented, my dear girl?" "Oh! yes madame; I am going to see Madame Georges, perhaps M. Rodolphe. I have some poor creatures very unfortunate to recommend to them. I hope they will assist them. Why should I not be content? If I were sad, should not my sadness disappear? And then, look! the sky is so gay with its rosy clouds! and the grass, how green it is, notwithstanding the season! and there—there—behind those willows, the river how large it is! the sun shines on it, it is dazzling; what golden reflections: it shone thus just now on the water in the little basin in the prison. God does not forget the prisoners. He gives them also their ray of the sun," added Fleur de Marie, with a kind of pious gratitude; then, led by the remembrance of her captivity, the better to appreciate the happiness of being free, she cried, in a burst of artless joy, "Ah! madame! and there in the middle of the river, do you see this pretty little island covered with willows and poplars, with the white house on the shore! how charming this habitation must be in the summer when all the trees are covered with leaves! What, repose what refreshing air must be found there!"

"Faith," said Madame Seraphin, with a strange smile, "I am delighted that you find the island pretty." "Why, madame?" "Because we are going there." "To this island!" "Yes: does it surprise you?" "A little, madame." "And if you should find your friends there?" "What do you say?" "Your friends collected there, to celebrate your deliverance from prison? would you not be more agreeably surprised?" "Can it be possible! Madame Georges? M. Rodolphe?" "Look here, my dear girl, I

have no more command over myself than a child. With your innocent looks, you make me say what I ought not to say." "I am going to see them! Oh! madame, how my heart beats!" "Don't go so fast! I can imagine your impatience, but I can hardly follow you, little mad-cap." "Pardon, madame, I am in such haste to arrive." "It is very natural. I do not reproach you for it—quite the contrary." "The road is steep here, and bad; will you take my arm, madame?" "It is not to be refused, my dear girl, for you are active and young, and I am old." "Lean well on me, madame; do not be afraid to fatigue me." "Thank you, my dear girl, your aid is very acceptable, this descent is so steep. Ah! now we are in a good road." "Ah! madame, is it then true, I go to see Madame Georges? I cannot believe it." "Yet a little patience—in fifteen minutes you will see her, and then you will believe!" "What I cannot comprehend," added Fleur de Marie, thoughtfully, "is, that Madame Georges awaits me there, instead of at the farm." "Always so curious, the dear girl." "How indiscreet I am, madame!" said Fleur de Marie, smiling. "Thus, to punish you, I have a mind to tell you of a surprise that your friends intend for you. "A surprise? for me, madame?" "Hold, leave me alone, little spy—you will make me speak in spite of myself." We will leave Madame Seraphin and her victim on the road which led to the river, and precede them both for some moments to the Island of the *Ravageur*.

CHAPTER III.

THE BOAT.

At night, the appearance of the island inhabited by the Martial family was gloomy, but in the brilliant light of the sun, nothing could be more charming and cheerful than this cursed dwelling-place.

Bordered by willows and poplars, and almost entirely covered with thick grass, intersected with winding paths of yellow gravel, the island contained a small vegetable garden and a number of fruit-trees. In this orchard was situated the thatched roof dwelling where Martial had wished to retire with François and Amandine. From this place the island terminated at its point by a kind of stockade, formed of large piles, to prevent the washing away

of the earth. Before the house was an arbour of green trelliswork reaching quite to the landing-place, destined to support during the summer the hop-vine, under whose shade were arranged the seats and tables of the guests.

At one of the extremities of the main building, painted white and covered with tiles, a woodhouse, surmounted by a granary, formed a sort of wing, much lower than the principal edifice. Immediately over the wing was a window with shutters covered with plates of iron, and fastened exteriorly by two bars of the same material. Three boats were lying at the landing-place, and at the bottom of one of them Nicolas was trying how the bung-hole worked which he had arranged.

Mounted on a bench outside of the arbour, Calebasse, with her eyes shaded by her hand, was looking in the direction where she expected Madame Seraphin and Fleur de Marie to appear. "No one yet, neither old nor young," said Calebasse, descending from her bench, and addressing Nicolas. If these women don't come in half-an-hour, we must go; the affair at Bras-Rouge's is better worth our while; he is waiting for us. The broker is to be at his house in the Champs Elysées at five o'clock—we must be there before him. This very morning La Chouette repeated it to us." "You are right," answered Nicolas, leaving his boat. "May the thunder crush this old woman, who physics us for no purpose! Of the two jobs perhaps we shall have neither. Besides, Bras-Rouge and Barbillon have need of us—of themselves they can do nothing." "It is true; for, while one does the business, Bras-Rouge must remain outside the tavern to watch, and Barbillon is not strong enough to drag the broker into the celler alone; she'll kick, this old woman." "Did not La Chouette tell us, laughingly, that she kept the Brigand as a *boarder* in this cellar?" "Not in this one; in another which is much deeper, and inundated when the river is high." "Mustn't he vegetate there, in that cellar! To be there all alone, and blind!"

"He will see clear there, if he sees nowhere else; the cellar is as dark a furnace." "All the same; when he has sung all the songs he knows to amuse himself, the time must appear devillishly long to him." "La Chouette says that he amuses himself in hunting rats, and that this cellar is very full of game." "I say, Nicolas, speaking of individuals who must be rather wearied, fatigued," said Calebasse, with a ferocious smile, pointing with

her finger to the window just described, "there is one there who must be sucking his own blood." "Bah! he is asleep. Since this morning he has made no noise; and his dog is silent."

"Perhaps he has strangled it for food; for these two days past they must have been almost mad with hunger up there." "It is their business. Martial may endure all this as long as he pleases, if it amuses him; when he has finished, they will say that he died from a severe illness; there will be no difficulty." "You think so?" "Most surely. On going this morning to Asnieres, mother met Ferot, the fisherman; as he expressed his surprise at not having seen his friend Martial for two days, she told him that Martial did not leave his bed he was so ill, and his life was despaired of. The man swallowed all that just like honey; he will tell it to others—and when the affair happens it will seem all natural."

"Yes, but he will not die at once; it takes a long time in this way."

"What would you have? there is no other way to manage it. This madman of a Martial, when he has a mind, is as wicked as the devil, and as strong as a bull in the bargain; had he suspected us, we could not have approached him without danger; while with his door once well nailed up on the outside, what can he do? His window was already ironed."

"Hold! he could loosen the bars by breaking away the plaster with his knife, which he would have done, if, mounted on a ladder, I had not mangled his hands with the hatchet every time he commenced his work!" "What a duty!" said the brigand, chuckling; "how much you must have been amused!"

"I had to give you time to arrive with the iron plate and bars which you went to Micou's for." "How he must have foamed! Dear brother!" "He ground his teeth like a madman; two or three times he tried to push me off with blows from his club, but then, having but one hand free, he could not work at the grating."

"Fortunately, there is no fire place in the room." "Yes, and the door is strong and his hands are wounded! but for this he would be capable of making a hole through the plank." "No, no there is no danger that he can escape. His bier is more solid than if it were made of oak and lead." "Yes—and when La Louve gets out of prison, and comes here to seek her man, as she calls him!" "Well! we will tell her to look for him!" "Apropos, do you know that if mother had not shut up these scamps of

La Lampe allumée. Frontispice.

children, they would have been capable of gnawing the door like rats, to deliver Martial! This little scoundrel François is a real devil since he suspects that we have shut up our big brother." "Ah, indeed! but are you going to leave them in the room up stairs while we are away from the island? Their window is not grated—they have only to descend from the outside." At this moment cries and sobs in the house attracted the attention of Nicolas and Calebasse. They saw the open door of the ground-floor shut violently; a moment after the pale and sinister face of the widow appeared at the kitchen window. With her long, bony arms she beckoned her children to come to the house. "Come, there is a squabble! I bet it is François who kicks," said Nicolas. "Scoundrel of a Martial! except for him this rogue would have been all alone. Watch well, and if you see the two females coming, call me."

While Calebasse, remounted on the bench, awaited their approach, Nicolas entered the house. The little Amandine, kneeling in the middle of the kitchen, wept, and asked pardon for her brother François. He, irritated and threatening, stood in one corner of the room, brandishing the hatchet of Nicolas. He seemed this time to make a desperate resistance to the wishes of his mother.

As usual, quiet and calm, she pointed to the half-open door leading to the cellar, and made a sign to her son that she wished François shut up there. "I will not go there!" cried the determined child, whose eyes sparkled like those of a wild-cat; "You wish to let us die with hunger, like our brother Martial." "Mamma, by the love of God leave us up stairs in our own room, as you did yesterday," asked the little girl, in a supplicating tone, clasping her hands; "in the dark cellar we will be so much afraid!" The widow looked at Nicolas in an impatient manner, as if to reproach him for not having executed her orders, and she again pointed to François. Seeing his brother approach, the young boy bandished his hatchet in a desperate manner, and cried, "If you want to shut me up there, whether it is my brother, mother, or Calebasse, so much the worse—I strike, and the hatchet cuts!" Both Nicolas and the widow felt the necessity of preventing the two children from going to the assistance of Martial during their absence, and also to conceal from them what was about to take place on the river. But Nicolas, as cowardly as he was ferocious; and not caring to receive a blow from the dangerous hatchet with

which his brother was armed, hesitated to approach him. The widow, vexed at the hesitation of her eldest son, pushed him roughly by the shoulder towards François. But Nicolas, again drew back, and cried out, "If he wounds me, what shall I do, mother? You know well enough I am about to need the use of both arms, and I still feel the blow that Martial has given me." The widow shrugged her shoulders with contempt, and made a step towards François. "Do not come near me mother!" cried the enraged boy, "or you shall be paid for all the blows you have given to me and Amandine." "My brother, rather let yourself be locked up. Oh! my God! do not strike our mother!" cried Amandine, terrified.

At this moment Nicolas saw on a chair a large woollen coverlet, which was used for the ironing-table; he seized it, and adroitly threw it over the head of François, who, in spite of all his efforts, finding himself entangled in its thick folds, could make no use of his arms. Then Nicolas threw himself upon him, and, with the aid of his mother, carried him into the cellar. Amandine had remained kneeling in the middle of the kitchen. As soon as she saw the fate of her brother, she arose quickly, and, notwithstanding her alarm, went of her own accord to join him in his gloomy prison. The door was double locked on the brother and sister.

"It is the fault of Martial, if these children are like devils, unchained against us," cried Nicolas. "Nothing has been heard in his chamber since this morning," said the widow, in a thoughtful manner, and she shuddered; "nothing." "That proves, mother, that you did well to say what you did to Ferot, the fisherman of Asnieres, that Martial was sick in bed, and like to die. In this way, when all is over, no one will be astonished.

After a moment's pause, and as if she had wished to escape a horrible thought, the widow said roughly, "did La Chouette come here while I was at Asnieres?" "Yes, mother." "Why did she not remain and go with us to Bras-Rouge? I am suspicious of her." "Bah! you suspect everybody mother: to-day it is La Chouette, yesterday it was Bras-Rouge." "Bras-Rouge is at liberty; my son is at Toulon; they both committed the same robbery." "You always repeat this old story. Bras-Rouge escaped because he is as cunning as a steel trap, that's all, La Chouette did not remain here, because she had appointed at two o'clock, near the *Observatory*, with the tall man

in black, on whose account she carried off this young girl from the country, with the assistance of the brigand and Tortillard; and it was even Barbillon who drove the hack which this tall man in black hired for the occasion. Come, now, mother, why should La Chouette inform against us, since she tells us what jobs she has in hand, and we do not tell her ours, for she knows nothing of our proposed drowning scrape. Be tranquil, mother, wolves don't eat one another. The day's work will be a good one. When I think that the broker has often twenty, thirty thousand francs' worth of diamonds in her bag, and that in two hours' time we shall have her in the cellars of Bras-Rouge! Thirty thousand francs in diamonds! Only think of it!" "And while we hold the broker, Bras-Rouge remains outside?" said the widow, with an air of suspicion. "And where should he be? If any one should come in, must he not answer, and prevent them from approaching the place where we are doing our job?" "Nicolas! Nicolas!" cried Calebasse from without, "here are the two women." "Quick, quick, mother; your shawl; I will row you over; it will be so much done," said Nicolas.

The widow had replaced her morning cap with one of black tulle. She wrapped herself in a large tartan shawl of white and grey, locked the door of the kitchen, placed the key behind one of the shutters of the rez-de-chaussée, and followed her son to the landing-place. Almost in spite of herself, before she left the island, she cast a long, lingering look at Martial's window, knit her brows, bit her lips, then, after a sudden fit of shivering, she murmured to herself, "It is his own fault — his own fault." "Nicolas, do you see them? there, just by that rising ground;" cried Calebasse, pointing to the other side of the river, where Madame Seraphin and Fleur de Marie appeared, descending a small path leading to the shore, near a small elevation, on which was placed a plaster-kiln. "Let us wait for the signal, and have no bungling," said Nicolas. "Are you blind? Don't you recognise the fat woman who came here the day before yesterday? Look at her orange shawl, and see what a hurry the little peasant girl is in! Poor little puss, it is plain to see she don't know what is coming." "Yes; I see the fat woman now. Come, this looks like work. Ah, let us make our plans, Calebasse," said Nicolas. "I will take the old woman and the young girl in my boat with the bunghole; you will follow

in the other, close behind, and be sure to row in such a manner that I can jump into your boat as soon as I set the trap at work, and mine will sink." "Don't be afraid; it is not the first time that I have rowed, is it?" "I am not afraid of being drowned myself—you know I can swim—but, if I do not jump just at the right moment into the other boat, the females, in their struggles, may catch hold of me, and thank you, I have no desire to drink *water* with them." "The old woman is making a sign with her handkerchief," said Calebasse; "there they are, on the shore." "Come, come, step on board, mother," cried Nicolas, unfastening the boat; "come into the boat with the bung-hole, so that the two women may not suspect anything. And you, Calebasse, jump into the other one, my girl; row strong. Ah! hold, take my hook, put it alongside of you—it is pointed like a lance—it may be of use; now push ahead," said the bandit, placing in the boat a long boat-hook, one end of which terminated with a sharp spike of iron.

In a few moments the two boats touched the shore, where Madame Seraphin and Fleur de Marie had been waiting impatiently. While Nicolas was tying his boat to a post, Madame Seraphin approached him, and whispered hurriedly, "Say that Madame Georges awaits us." Then she said, in a loud tone, "We are a little behindhand, my boy." "Yes, my good lady, Madame Georges has asked for you several times." "You see, my dear girl, Madame Georges is waiting for us," said Madame Seraphin, turning towards Fleur de Marie, who, notwithstanding her confidence, had felt her heart beat at the appearance of the sinister faces of the widow, Calebasse, and Nicolas. But the name of Madame Georges reassured her, and she answered, "I am, also, very impatient to see Madame Georges; happily the passage is short." "Won't the dear lady be happy," said Madame Seraphin. Then, turning towards Nicolas, she added, "Come, my boy, bring your boat a little nearer, that we can embark;" and, in a low tone, she whispered, "The little one must be drowned; if she comes up, put her under again." "It is said; and you, don't be afraid; when I make a sign, give me your hand. She will sink all alone—all is prepared—you have nothing to fear," answered Nicolas, in a low tone. Then, with savage imperturbility, without being touched either with the beauty or youth of Fleur de Marie,

he offered her his arm. The young girl leaned lightly on him, and entered the boat. "Now, your turn, my good lady," said Nicolas to Madame Seraphin. And he offered to assist her.

Whether it was a presentiment, suspicion, or only a fear that she could not jump quick enough from the boat where La Goualeuse and Nicolas were seated when it should sink, the housekeeper said to Nicolas, drawing back, "On second thoughts, I will go into your boat." And she took a seat alongside of Calebasse. "Very good," said Nicolas, exchanging a glance with his sister; and, with the end of his oar, he shoved off his boat, his sister doing the same as soon as Madame Seraphin had taken her seat. Standing on the shore, erect, immovable, indifferent to the scene, the widow, pensive and absorbed, kept her eyes fixed on Martial's window, which could be distinguished, through the poplar trees, from the shore. During this time the two boats moved slowly off towards the opposite side.

CHAPTER IV.

BONHEUR DE SE REVOIR.

Before we acquaint the reader with the 'denouement' of the drama which passed in the boats, we will go back a little. A few minutes after Fleur de Marie had left Saint Lazare with Madame Seraphin, La Louve had also quitted the prison. Thanks to the recommendations of Madame Armand and of the director, she had been also pardoned and dismissed. A complete change had taken place in this creature, heretofore so headstrong, vile, and corrupted. Keeping constantly in mind the description made by Fleur de Marie of a peaceful and solitary life, La Louve held in horror her past crimes. To retire to the depths of the forests with Martial, such was her only ambition, her fixed idea, against which all her ancient and bad instincts had in vain revolted. Separated from La Goualeuse (from whose growing influence she had fled), this strange woman had retired to another quarter of the prison. To cause this rapid and sincere conversion (more assured, and consolidated by the fruitless struggles of the perverse habits of her companions), Fleur de Marie, following the impulse of her native good sense, had thus reasoned. La Louve, a violent and resolute creature, loves Martial passion-

ately; she must, then, with joy hail a possibility of leaving the ignominious life of which she is ashamed for the first time, and of dedicating herself entirely to this rough man, whose every desire is hers—who seeks solitude as much from taste, as to escape the reprobation which pursues his detestable family. Aided solely by these elements, Fleur de Marie, in giving a praiseworthy direction to the savage love and bold character of this creature, had then changed an abandoned girl into an honest woman. For only to dream of marrying Martial and retiring with him to the woods, to live there a life of labour and privation, is it not absolutely the wish of a virtuous woman?

Confiding in the aid which Fleur de Marie had promised her in the name of her unknown benefactor, La Louve determined to make this laudable proposition to her lover, not without the bitter fear of a refusal, for the Goualeuse, in leading her to blush for the past, had also given her a consciousness of her position towards Martial. Once free, La Louve only thought of seeing him. She had received no news from him for many days. In the hope of meeting him at the island of the Ravageur, and decided to wait there if she did not find him, she got into a cabriolet, and was rapidly driven to the bridge of Asnieres, which she crossed about fifteen minutes before Madame Seraphin and Fleur de Marie, coming on foot from the barrier had arrived on the shore near the plaster-kiln.

When Martial did not come to take La Louve in his boat, to the island, she forthwith applied to an old fisherman named Ferot, who lived near the bridge. At four o'clock in the afternoon, a cabriolet stopped at the entrance of a little street of the village of Asnieres. La Louve gave five francs to the coachman, jumped to the ground, and ran hastily to the abode of Ferot. Having thrown off her prison dress, she wore a robe of dark green merino, a red shawl, imitation cashmere, and a lace cap trimmed with ribands; her thick, crispy hair, was scarcely smoothed. In her impatience to see Martial, she had dressed herself with more haste than care. On reaching the house of the fisherman, she found him seated at the door, mending his nets. As soon as she saw him, she cried out, "Your boat, Ferot, quick, quick." "Ah! is it you? Good-day, good-day. You have not been here for a long time." "Yes, but your boat; quick, to the island." "Ah well! fate will have it so: my good girl, it is impossible to day."

"How?" "My boy has taken my boat to go with the others to a rowing match at Saint Ouen. There is not a single boat left on the whole shore from this to the docks." "Thunder!" cried La Louve, stamping and clenching her fist: "it happens so, expressly for me!" "It is true! on my word! I am very sorry I cannot convey you to the island, for, without doubt, he must be worse." "Worse? Who?" "Martial!" "Martial?" cried La Louve, seizing Ferot by the collar: "is Martial sick?" "Did you not know it?" "Martial!" "Yes, certainly: but you will tear my blouse; do be quiet." "He is sick! And since when?" "Since two or three days." "It is false! he would have written to me.' "Ah, well, yes! he is too sick to write." "Too sick to write? And he is on the island! you are sure of it?" "I will tell you. This morning I met the widow Martial—ordinarily, when I see her on one side, you understand, I generally cross to the other; for I don't like her company—then—" "But my Martial: where is he? "Stop a moment. Finding myself face to face with his mother, I did not dare to avoid her: she looks so wicked, that I am afraid of her; she is stronger than I am: 'Here is two days now that I have not seen your Martial,' said I to her; 'has he gone to the city?' Thereupon she looked at me with her two eyes—but such eyes—they would have killed me had they been pistols."

"I suffocate; what next, what next?" Ferot was silent for a moment, then said "Hold! you are a good girl: promise to be secret, and I will tell you everything, as I know it." "About Martial?" "Yes; for do you see, Martial is a good fellow, although wrong-headed; and if anything should happen to him from his old she-devil of a mother, or his scoundrel of a brother, it would be a pity." "But what has happened? What have his mother, and brother done to him? Where is he? Speak! why don't you speak?" "Come, good; there you are again at my blouse! Let me go. If you interrupt me by destroying my clothes, I can never finish, and you will know nothing." "Oh! what patience!" cried La Louve, stamping her feet with rage. "You will not tell any one what I am going to say?" "No, no, no!" "Word of honour?" "Ferot, you'll throw me into convulsions." "Oh, what a girl!" what a girl! Hasn't she a hot head! I'll go on. In the first place, you must know that Martial is more and more at loggerheads with his family, and if they should play him some bad trick, I should not be surprised. It is on this account that I am sorry my boat

is not here, for if you count on those from the island, you are wrong. Neither Nicolas nor this hussey of a Calebasse will take you there." "I know it well enough. But what did his mother say? Did he fall sick on the island?" "Don't get me into a scrape; this is the story: this morning I said to the widow 'For two days past I have not seen Martial; his boat is there. Is he in the city?' Thereupon the widow looked at me with her wicked eyes: 'He is sick on the island; and so sick that he will never come off again.' I said to myself. 'How can that be? There are three days that'—'Well! what?' said Ferot, interrupting himself: "Well! where are you going to? where the devil is she running to now?"

Believing the life of Martial menaced by the inhabitants of the island, La Louve, overcome with alarm, and transported with rage, listened no longer to the fisherman, but ran along the Seine.

Some topographical details are indispensable to understand the following scene. The island of the Ravageur approached nearer the left side of the river than the right shore, from whence Fleur de Marie and Madame Seraphin had embarked. La Louve was on the left side. Without being very steep, the hills on the island concealed in all its length, the view of one shore from the other. Thus, La Louve, had not seen the embarkation of La Goualeuse, and the Martial family, of course, could not see her as she ran along the shore on the opposite side. The country house belonging to Dr. Griffon, where the Count Saint Remy temporarily dwelt, was built on the hill side, near the shore where La Louve was wandering, half distracted. She passed, without seeing them, near two persons, who struck with her haggard look, turned to follow her at a distance. These two persons were the Count Saint Remy and Doctor Griffon. The first movement of La Louve, on learning the peril of her lover; had been to run impetuously towards the place where she knew he was in danger. But as she approached the island she thought of the difficulty of getting there. As the old fisherman had told her, she could not count on any strange boat, and no one from the Martial family would come for her. Breathless, her face flushed, her eyes sparkling, she stopped opposite to a point of the island which, forming a curve at this place, was nearest to the mainland. Through the leafless branches of the willows and poplars, La Louve could see the roof of the house where, perhaps, Martial was dying. At this sight, uttering a fearful groan, she tore off her shawl, her cap, and slipping down

her robe, keeping on her petticoat, she threw herself into the river, and waded until she lost her footing, when she began to swim vigorously towards the island. It was a spectacle of savage energy. At each stroke, the thick and long hair of La Louve, untied by the violence of her movements, shook about her head like a shaggy mane. * * *

Suddenly, from the other side of the island resounded a cry of distress, a cry of terrible, desperate agony. La Louve shuddered, and stopped short. Then sustaining herself on the water with one hand, with the other she pushed back her thick hair, and listened. A new cry was heard, but more feeble, more supplicating, convulsive, expiring—and all relapsed into a profound silence. "My Martial!" cried La Louve, swimming again with all her strength. She thought she recognised the voice of Martial.

The count and the doctor had not been able to follow La Louve quick enough to prevent what she accomplished. They arrived opposite to the island at the moment that the two fearful screams were heard, and stopped, as much alarmed as La Louve. Seeing her struggle intrepidly against the current, they cried, "The poor thing will be drowned." These fears were vain; she swam like an otter; still a few more strokes, and she reached the land. She was getting out of the water by the assistance of the poles, which formed a kind of stockade at the end of the island, when she perceived the body of a young girl, dressed as a peasant, sustained by her clothes, floating down the current. To grasp with one hand the poles, and with the other to seize hold of the girl by her dress, such was the movement of La Louve, a movement as rapid as thought. Then she drew her so violently towards her, and within the stakes, that, for a moment she disappeared under the water, which was of no great depth at this place. Endued with no common strength and address, La Louve raised up La Goualeuse (for it was she), whom she had not recognised, took her up in her robust arms, as one would have taken a child, made some steps in the water, and, finally, laid her on the green bank of the island. "Courage, courage!" said Saint Remy to her, a witness, as well as Doctor Griffon, of this bold act. "We are going to cross the bridge, and will come to your aid in a boat." La Louve did not hear these words. Let us repeat, that from the right shore of the Seine, where Nicolas, Calebasse, and their mother remained, after the consummation of

their horrible crime, nothing could be seen of the other side, owing to the height of the island. Fleur de Marie, suddenly drawn within the stockade by La Louve, having plunged for a moment, and not having reappeared to the sight of her murderers, they believed their victim drowned and engulfed. Some few moments afterward, the current brought down another body, in an eddy, which La Louve did not perceive. It was the corpse of the notary's housekeeper. Dead, quite dead, this one. Nicolas, Calebasse had as much interest as Ferrand to get rid of this witness, this accomplice of their new crime; thus when the boat with the bung-hole sunk with Fleur de Marie, Nicolas, springing into the boat of his sister, nearly upset it, and, seizing a favourable moment, threw the housekeeper into the river, and despatched her with the boat hook. * * *

Out of breath and exhausted, La Louve, kneeling on the ground alongside of Fleur de Marie, recruited her strength, and examined the features of her whom she had rescued from death. Let her surprise be imagined when she recognised her companion of the prison; her companion, who had exercised upon her destiny an influence so rapid, so benevolent. In her surprise, for a moment, she forgot Martial.

"La Goualeuse!" cried she. And, with bended body, leaning on her hands and knees, her hair dishevelled, her clothes dripping with water, she contemplated the unhappy child, extended, almost expiring, on the ground. Pale, inanimate, her eyes half open and without expression, her beautiful flaxen hair falling flat over her forehead, her blue lips, her small hand, already stiff and icy; one would have thought her dead. "La Goualeuse," repeated La Louve, "what chance! I who came to say to my Martial the good and evil she had done me with her words and promises; the resolution that I had taken. Poor little thing! I find her here, dead! But, no, no!" cried La Louve, approaching still nearer to Fleur de Marie, and feeling an almost imperceptible breath escape from her mouth.

"No! My God! she breathes still; I have saved her from death; that has never happened to me before, to save any one. Ah! that does me good; it makes me warm. Yes, but my Martial, I must save him also. Perhaps, at this moment he is expiring; his mother and brother are capable of killing him. Yet I cannot leave this poor little thing here. I will carry her to

the widow's; she must take care of her, and show me Martial, or I will break everything; I will kill everybody. Oh! neither mother, brother, nor sister do I care for when I know my Martial is there." And immediately getting up, La Louve carried Fleur de Marie in her arms. With this light burden she ran towards the house, not doubting but that the widow and her daughter, notwithstanding their wickedness, would lend their assistance to Fleur de Marie.

When she reached the highest part of the island, from whence could be seen both shores of the Seine, Nicolas, his mother, and Calebasse were far off; they were then going in all haste to the dwelling of Bras-Rouge.

At this moment also a man, who, concealed in the plaster-kiln had invisibly assisted at this horrible tragedy, disappeared, believing, with the murderers, that the crime was executed. This man was Ferrand. One of Nicolas's boats was tied to a pile near the place where the Goualeuse and Madame Seraphin had embarked. Hardly had Ferrand left the plaster-kiln to return to Paris, when Saint Remy and Doctor Griffon hastily passed the bridge of Asnieres, running towards the island, thinking to reach it by Nicolas's boat, which they had seen from afar. To her great surprise, on arriving at the house of the Ravageurs, La Louve found the door closed. Placing the still inanimate body of Fleur de Marie under the arbour, she drew near to the house. She knew the window of Martial's chamber. What was her surprise to see the shutters covered with iron plates, and fastened with bars of the same material. Suspecting partly the truth, La Louve uttered a hoarse, resounding cry, and began to call with all her strength, "Martial! my friend!" No one answered. Alarmed at this silence, La Louve began to walk round the building like a savage beast who scents his mate, and seeks, in roaring, the entrance of the den where he is confined. From time to time she cried, "My man—are you there, my man?" And in her rage she shook the bars of the kitchen window—she knocked against the wall—she kicked against the door. All at once a hollow sound answered from the interior of the house. La Louve shuddered—listened. The noise ceased. "My man has heard me! I must enter, even if I have to gnaw the door with my teeth!" and again she uttered her savage cries. Several blows, feebly struck on the inside of the window shutters of Mar-

tial's room, answered to her shouts. "He is there," cried she, stopping suddenly under the windows of her lover; "he is there! if necessary, I will tear off the iron shutters with my nails, but I will open these shutters." So saying, she saw a large ladder placed behind one of the blinds of the lower rooms; in drawing this blind violently towards her, La Louve caused the key to fall which the widow had concealed on the window bench. "If it unlocks," said La Louve, trying the key in the lock, "I can go up to his chamber. It opens," cried she, with joy; "my friend is saved."

Once in the kitchen, she was struck by the cries of the children, who, shut up in the cellar, and hearing an extraordinary noise, called for help. The widow, believing that no one would come to the island or house during her absence, had contented herself with locking François and Amandine in the cellar, leaving the key in the lock. Set at liberty by La Louve, the brother and sister rushed precipitately from the cellar, crying, "Oh, La Louve save our brother Martial? they wish to make him die: during two days he has been walled up in his chamber."

"They have not wounded him?" "No, no; we believe not." "I arrive in time," cried La Louve, rushing to the staircase; then suddenly stopping, she said, "And La Goualeuse, whom I forget. Amandine, some fire at once; you and your brother, bring here, near the chimney-place, a poor girl who was drowning. I saved her.

She is under the arbour. François, a pair of pincers, a hatchet, an iron bar, so that I can break down the door of my Martial." "Here is an axe to split wood, but it is too heavy for you," said the young boy. "Too heavy," cried La Louve, and she lifted with ease this mass of iron, which, under any other circumstances, she could hardly have raised from the ground. Then mounting the stairs four at a time, she repeated to the two children, "Run and bring in the young girl, and place her near the fire." In two bounds, La Louve was at the bottom of the corridor, at Martial's door. "Courage, my friend—here is your Louve!" cried she and raising the hammer with both hands, with a furious blow she shook the door. "It is nailed on the outside. Draw out the nails," cried Martial, in a feeble voice. Throwing herself on her knees in the corridor, with the aid of the pincers, and of her nails, and her fingers, which she tore, La Louve succeeded in

drawing out the enormous nails which fastened the door. At length the door was opened. Martial, pale, his hands covered with blood, fell almost lifeless into the arms of La Louve.

CHAPTER V.

LA LOUVE AND MARTIAL.

"At length, I see you! I hold you! I have you!" cried La Louve, receiving Martial in her arms with an accent of joy and savage energy; then, sustaining him, almost carrying him, she led him to a seat placed in the corridor. During some moments, Martial remained weak and feeble, endeavouring to recover from this violent shock, which had exhausted his failing strength. La Louve saved her lover at the moment, when, in a state of despair, he felt himself about to die, less from the want of food than from the deprivation of air, impossible to be renewed in a small room without a chimney, without any aperture, and hermetically closed—through the atrocious foresight of Calebasse, who had stopped up with old linen even the smallest fissures of the door and window. Palpitating with happiness and anguish, her eyes wet with tears, La Louve, on her knees, watched the smallest movements of Martial. By degrees, he seemed to recover, as he breathed the pure and salubrious air. After a slight shudder, he raised his weary head, uttered a long sigh, and opened his eyes.

"Martial, it is I! it is your Louve! how do you feel?" "Better," answered he, in a feeble voice. "My God! what will you have? water, vinegar?" "No, no," cried Martial, less and less oppressed. "Oh! some air! nothing but air!" La Louve, at the risk of cutting her hands, broke the glass of a window which she could not open without moving the heavy table. "Now I breathe; I breathe; my head is relieved;" said Martial, coming quite to himself. Then, as if for the first time recalling to mind the services she had rendered him, he cried, in a tone of ineffable gratitude, "Without you, I should have died, my good Louve." "Well, well; how are you now?" "Better and better." "Are you hungry?" "No, I am too weak. I suffered most from want of air: finally, I suffocated! it was frightful." "And now?" "I live again! I come out from the tomb, and I come out—thanks to you!"

"But your hands your poor hands! these wounds! Who did this?" "Nicolas and Calebasse, not daring to attack me openly a second time, shut me in my chamber, and left me to die with hunger. I tried to prevent them from nailing up my window—my sister cut my hands with the hatchet. The monsters! they wished to have it believed that you were dead from some sickness; your mother had already spread the report that you were in a dying state. Your mother, my man, your mother!" "Hold! do not speak to me of her," said Martial, bitterly, then, for the first time remarking the wet clothes, and strange accoutrement of La Louve, he cried, "What has happened to you—your hair is streaming with water? You are without your dress."

"What matters it? You are saved!" "But explain to me why you are wet." "I knew you were in danger—I could find no boat." "And you swam here?" "Yes. But your hands; let me kiss them. You suffer—the monsters. And I was not there!" "Oh! my brave Louve!" cried Martial, with enthusiasm: "brave among all brave creatures." "Did you not write there, '*Death to cowards?*'"

And La Louve showed her arm, where these words were written in indelible characters. "Intrepid girl! Go in: but you feel the cold; you tremble."

"It is not the cold." "Never mind. Go in there; you will take the cloak of Calebasse—you will wrap yourself in it." "But—" "I wish it." In a second, La Louve was enveloped in a tartan cloak, and returned.

"For me to run the risk of drowning!" repeated Martial, looking at her with pride. "On the contrary. A poor little girl was almost drowned. I saved her on reaching the island—" "You saved her also—where is she?" "Below, with the children; they are taking care of her." "And who is this young girl?" "My God! if you knew what a chance! what a happy chance! She is one of my companions of Saint Lazare—a very extraordinary girl."

"How is that?" "Imagine that I loved her, and hated her, because she at the same time planted both death and happiness in my heart." "She?" "Yes; concerning you." "Me?"

"Listen, Martial." Then, interrupting herself, she added, "No, no. I shall never dare." "What is it, then?" "I wished to ask something of you. I came to see you on this account; for

when I left Paris, I did not know that you were in danger." "Well! speak." "I dare not." "You dare not, after what you have just done for me!"

"Exactly; it would seem as if I asked a recompense." "Asked a recompense. And do I not owe you one? Did you not take care of me night and day, in my sickness last year?" "Are you not my Martial?" "Then, you should speak to me frankly, because I am your Martial, and will be always." "Always, Martial?" "Always; true as I am called Martial. For me, there shall be no other woman in the world but you, La Louve. No matter what you have been, so much the worse; it is my business. I love you—you love me; and I owe my life to you. But, since you have been in prison, I am no longer the same: much has happened. I have reflected; and you shall no more be what you have been." "What do you mean to say?" "I never wish to leave you again. Neither do I wish to leave François and Amandine."

"Your little brother and sister?" "Yes; from this day I must be to them a father—you comprehend. This gives me duties to perform, that tames me. I am obliged to take care of them. They wished to make finished brigands of them: to save them, I shall take them away." "Where?" "I don't know; but certainly far from Paris." "And I?" "You? I will take you also." "Take me also?" cried La Louve, in a joyous delirium. She could not believe in so much happiness. "I shall not leave you?" "No, my brave La Louve, never. You shall aid me to bring up these children. I know you. On saying to you, that I wish my poor little Amandine should be a virtuous girl, I know what you will be for her—a good mother."

"Oh! thank you, Martial, thank you!" "We will live as honest work folks; be easy, we will find work; we will work like negroes. But, at least, these children shall not be like their father and mother. I shall not hear myself called any more the son and brother of a guillotined; in fine, I shall no more pass through streets where I am known. But what is the matter?" "Martial, I am afraid I shall become crazy," "Crazy?" "Crazy with joy!" "Why?" "Because do you see it is too much!" "What? "What? you ask me. Oh! no; do you see, it is too much: because I have saved the Goualeuse, this has brought me this happiness; it must be so."

"But, once more, what is the matter?" "What you have just asked. Oh! Martial; Martial." "Well?" "I came to ask you—" "To leave Paris?" "Yes," answered she, quickly; "to go with you in the woods, where we should have a nice little house; children whom I should love. Oh! how I should love them; how your Louve would love the children of her Martial; or, rather, if you wished it," said La Louve, trembling, I would call you my husband; for we shall not have the place unless you consent to this," she hastened to add, quickly.

Martial, in his turn, looked at La Louve with astonishment, not in the least understanding her words. "Of what place do you speak?" "A gamekeepers." "That I shall have?" "Yes." "And who will give it me?" "The protectors of the young girl whom I have saved." "They do not know me." "But I have spoken of you, and she will recommend us to her protectors."

"And what did you say about me?" "What should I say?" "Good, Louve." "And, besides, you may conceive that, in prison, confidence is soon gained; and this young person was so handsome, so mild, that in spite of myself, I felt attracted towards her; I at once saw that she was none of us." "Who is she, then?" "I don't know; I can't understand anything; but in my life I have never seen, never heard anything like her: she is like a fairy to read what one has in the heart; when I told her how much I loved you, instantly, on that account, she became interested, not by using hard words, but in speaking to me of a very laborious, hard life, tranquilly passed with you, according to your taste, in the midst of the forest; only, according to her idea, instead of being a poacher, you were to be a gamekeeper, and I your wife; and then our children were to run to meet you when you returned at night from your rounds, with the dogs, your gun on your shoulder; and then we would sup at the door of our cabin, id the cool of the evening, under the large trees; and then we would retire to rest so happy, so peaceful. What shall I say? in spite of myself I listened; it was like a charm. If you knew—she spoke so well—that, all that she said, I thought I could see! I dreamed wide awake!" "Ah! yes! it would be a happy life," said Martial sighing in his turn: "without being altogether rotten at heart, this poor François has associated too much with Calebasse and Nicolas; so that the good air of the woods will be much better for him than the air of the city. Amandine

could help you in the house; I would be a good keeper, as I was a famous poacher. I should have you for my manager, my brave Louve, and then, as you say, with children, what should we need? When once one is accustomed to the forest, one is quite at home; a hundred years would pass as one day; but, see now, I am a fool. Hold, you should not have spoken to me of this life; it only causes regrets, that's all." "I let you go on, because you say exactly what I did to La Goualeuse." "How?" "Yes, in listening to these fairy tales, I said to her 'What a pity, that *these castles in the air*, as you call them, La Goualeuse, are not the truth!' Do you know what she answered, Martial?" said La Louve, her eyes sparkling with joy. "No!' "Let Martial marry you, promise both of you to live an honest life, and this place, which causes you so much envy, I am almost sure to obtain for you on leaving the prison," was her answer. "A keeper's place for me?" "Yes, for you." "But you are right—it is a dream. If it only were needful that I should marry you to obtain this place, my brave Louve, it should be done to-morrow, if I had the means; for, from to-day, do you see, you are my wife—my true wife." "Martial, I your real wife?" "My real, my sole wife, and I wish you to call me your husband; it is just the same as if the mayor had joined us." "Oh! La Goualeuse was right: it makes one so proud to say, '*My husband!*' Martial —you shall see your Louve keeping house, at work—you shall see." "But this place; do you believe?" "Poor little Goualeuse, if she deceives herself it is for others; for she appeared to believe what she told me. Besides, just now, on leaving the prison, the inspectress told me that the protectors of La Goualeuse, people of high rank, had taken her from the prison this very day; that proves that she has benefactors, and that she can do what she has promised." "Ah!" cried Martial suddenly, rising from his seat, "I do not know what we are thinking about." "What is it?" "This young girl, she is below, dying, perhaps; and instead of helping her, we are here." "Be satisfied, François and Amandine are with her; they would have called us if there had been any danger. But you are right: let us go to her; you must see her, she to whom, perhaps, we shall owe our happiness." And Martial, leaning on the arm of La Louve, descended the stairs.

Before they enter the kitchen, we will relate what passed since Fleur de Marie had been confided to the care of the children.

CHAPTER VI.

DOCTOR GRIFFON.

FRANCOIS and Amandine had just carried Fleur de Marie into the kitchen near the fire, when Count Saint Remy and Doctor Griffon, who had crossed over in Nicolas's boat, entered the house. While the children stirred up the fire and threw on some dry faggots, which, soon kindling, gave out a cheerful blaze, Doctor Griffon exercised all his skill to restore the young girl.

"The poor child is hardly seventeen!" cried the count, profoundly affected; then turning towards the doctor, he said, "Well, what do you think, my friend?" "I can hardly feel the pulse; but, what is very singular, the skin of the face is not coloured blue in this subject, as is ordinarily the case in asphyxia from submersion," answered the doctor with impurtable sang froid, looking at Fleur de Marie with an air profoundly meditative.

Doctor Griffon was a tall, thin man, very pale, and completely bald, except two very scanty tufts of black hair, most carefully gathered from behind, and laid flat on the forehead; his face wrinkled and furrowed by hard study, expressed at once intelligence, reflection, and coldness. Of immense knowledge, consummate experience, a skilful and renowned practitioner, principal physician of a civil hospital (where we shall find him by and by), Doctor Griffon had but one defect—that of making, if we may so express it, a complete oversight of the patient, and only attending to the disease: young or old, man or woman, rich or poor, no matter; he thought only of the medical fact, more or less curious or interesting in a scientific point of view, which the *subject* offered. For him there only existed *subjects*.

"What a charming face! how handsome she is, notwithstanding this frightful pallor!" said Saint Remy, contemplating Fleur de Marie with sadness. "Have you ever seen, my dear doctor, features more regular or more lovely? And so young." "The age is nothing," said the physician, roughly; "no more than the presence of water in the lungs, which formerly was thought to be mortal. They were most grossly deceived; the admirable experiments of the famous Goodwin, have proved it." But, doctor—" "But it is a fact," answered he, absorbed by the love of his art. "To ascertain the presence of a foreign liquid in the lungs, Goodwin plunged some cats and dogs into a tub of ink for some

seconds, drew them out living, and dissected them some time afterwards. Well! he convinced himself that the ink had penetrated into the lungs, and that the presence of this liquid in the organs of respiration had not caused the death of the subjects." The count knew the physician to be an excellent man at heart, but that his phrensied passion for the sciences often made him appear hard-hearted, and almost cruel. "Have you, at least, any hope?" asked he, with impatience. "The extremities of the subject are very cold," said the doctor: "there is but little hope." "Ah! to die at this age—poor child! it is frightful!" "The pupil fixed, dilated," answered the immovable doctor, raising with his finger the glazed eyelid of Fleur de Marie. "Strange man!" cried the count, almost with indignation: one would think you without feeling; and yet I have seen you watch by my bedside night after night. If I had been your brother, you could not have been more devoted." The doctor quite occupied in administering to Fleur de Marie, answered the count, without looking at him, and with settled calmness, "Do you believe that one meets every day with such a malignant fever, so marvellously complicated, so curious to study as the one you had? It was admirable, my good friend, admirable! Stupor, delirium, twitchings of the sinews, syncopes; it united the most varied symptoms—your *dead* fever; you were also a rare thing, very rare, and eminently interesting; you were also affected in a partial and momentary manner with paralysis, if you please. If it were only for this fact, your disease had a right to all my attention; you presented to me a magnificent study; for, frankly, my dear friend, all I desire in this world is to come across just such another fine case —but one has no such luck twice." The count shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

It was at this moment that Martial descended, leaning on the arm of La Louve, who had, as the reader knows, thrown over her wet clothes a tartan cloak belonging to Calebasse.

Struck with the pale looks of the lover of La Louve, and remarking his hands covered with coagulated blood, the count cried, "Who is this man?" "*My husband*," answered La Louve, looking at Martial with an expression of happiness and noble pride, impossible to describe. "You have a good and intrepid wife," said the count to him. "I saw her save this unfortunate child with rare courage." "Oh! yes, my wife is good and in-

trepid," answered Martial, dwelling on the words, and looking at La Louve in his turn with an air at once tender and affectionate. "Yes, intrepid! for she also saved my life." "Yours?" said the astonished count. "See his hands, his poor hands," said La Louve, wiping the tears which softened the indignant sparkling of her eyes. "Ah! this is horrible!" cried the count. "This poor fellow has had his hands chopped. Look, doctor."

Turning his head slightly, and looking over his shoulder at the numerous wounds which Calebasse had made, the doctor said "open and shut your hand." Martial executed this movement with much pain. The doctor shrugged his shoulders, continued to occupy himself with Fleur de Marie, and said disdainfully, as if with regret, "These wounds are absolutely nothing serious. None of the tendons are injured; in eight days the subject can use his hands." "Then, sir, my *husband* will not be a cripple?" cried La Louve, with gratitude. The doctor shook his head negatively. "And La Goualeuse, sir? She will live, will she not?" asked La Louve. "Oh! she must live; my husband and I owe her so much." Then turning towards Martial, "Poor little thing! There she is, she of whom I spoke. It is she who perhaps will be the cause of our happiness. It is she who gave me the idea of telling you all I have said. See what chance has done, that I should save her, and here too." "She is our providence," said Martial, struck with the beauty of La Goualeuse. "What an angel face! Oh! she will live, will she not, doctor?" "I don't know," answered the physician; but, in the first place, perhaps she will remain here; can she have the necessary attentions?"

"Here!" cried La Louve; "why they murder here!" "Hush! hush!" said Martial. The count and doctor looked at La Louve with surprise. "This house has a bad reputation. It surprises me the less," whispered the physician to Saint Remy. "You have, then, been the victim of violence?" asked the count. "Who wounded you in this manner?" "It is nothing, sir. I had a dispute here, a fight ensued, and I have been wounded. But this young girl cannot remain in the house," added he, in a gloomy manner. "I shall not remain myself, neither my wife, nor my brother, nor my sister. We leave the island never to return." "Oh! what joy," cried both of the children.

"Then what must we do?" said the doctor, regarding Fleur de Marie." "It is impossible to think of transporting this subject in

this state of prostration. Yet, happily, my house is close at hand, and my gardener's wife and daughter will make excellent nurses. Since this asphyxia from submersion interests you, you shall overlook her attendants, my dear Saint Remy, and I will come and see her every day." "And you play the part of a hard-hearted, unmerciful man," cried the count, "when you have a most generous heart, as this proposition proves."

"If the subject sinks, as is possible, there will be a most interesting autopsy, which will allow me to confirm once more the assertions of Goodwin."

"What you say is frightful," said the count. "For him who knows how to read it, the human body is a book where one learns to save the life of the sick," said Doctor Griffon, stoically. "In fine, you do good," said Saint Remy, bitterly; that is the important thing. What matters the cause, as long as the benefit exists? Poor child, the more I look at her, the more she interests me." "And she deserves it, sir," cried La Louve, passionately, drawing near. "You know her?" said the count. "Do I know her? It is to her that I owe the happiness of my life! in saving her I have not done as much for her as she has done for me." "And who is she?" asked the count. "An angel, sir; all that there is good in the world. Yes; and although she is dressed as a peasant girl, there is not a citizen, not a grand lady who can talk as well as she can, with her little soft voice, just like music. She is a noble girl, courageous and good." "How did she fall in the water?"

"I do not know, sir." "She is not a peasant girl, then?" asked the count. "A peasant girl! look at her small white hands." "It is true, said the count; "what a singular mystery! But her name, her family?" "Come," said the doctor, interrupting the conversation, "the subject must be carried to the boat." Half an hour afterward, Fleur de Marie, who had not yet recovered her senses, was taken to the house of the physician, placed in a warm bed, and maternally watched by the gardener's wife, assisted by La Louve. The doctor promised the count, who was more and more interested in La Goualeuse, to return the same evening to visit her.

Martial went to Paris with François and Amandine, La Louve not being willing to leave Fleur de Marie, until she was out of danger. The island of the Ravageur remained deserted. We

shall soon meet with its wretched occupants at Bras-Rouge's, where they had agreed to meet La Chouette, to murder the diamond Broker. In the mean while, we will conduct the reader to the rendezvous that Tom, the brother of Sarah, had given to the horrible old woman, the accomplice of the brigand.

Thomas Seyton, brother of Sarah M'Gregor, walked impatiently up and down on one of the Boulevards near to the Observatory, when he saw La Chouette appear.

The old wretch had on a white cap, and was wrapped up in a large red plaid shawl; the point of a round and very sharp dagger stuck through the bottom of the straw basket which she carried on her arm; this had once belonged to the brigand, but Tom did not perceive it. "Three o'clock strikes at the Luxembourg," said the old woman. "I arrive like March in Lent, I hope?" "Come," answered Thomas Seyton; and walking before her, he crossed some waste ground, entered a deserted street situated near the "*Rue* Cassini," stopped about the middle of the passage, where it was obstructed by a turnstile, opened a small door, made a sign for La Chouette to follow him, and after having taken a few steps in an alley, shaded with large trees, said, "Wait here," and disappeared.

"If he don't make me lose too much time," said La Chouette, "I must be at Bras-Rouge's at five, to finish the broker. Ah! speaking of that, and my dagger, the scoundrel, he has his nose out of the window," added the old woman, seeing the point of her dagger sticking through her basket. "So much for not having put on his cap." And taking it out, she placed it in such a manner, that it was completely concealed.

"It is a tool of Fourline's," said she. "Did he not ask me for it, to kill the rats, which come and laugh at him in his cellar? Poor Beasts! They have only the old man without eyes to divert them, and keep them company! The least they can do is to nibble him a little. Thus I don't wish him to do any harm to these rats, and I keep the dagger. Besides, I shall soon want it for the broker, perhaps. Thirty thousand francs' worth of diamonds—what a treasure for each of us! A good day's work; it is not like the other day. This brigand of a notary, whom I wanted to pluck—ah! well! yes. I did threaten him, if he would not give me money, to inform that it was his housekeeper who gave me La Goualeuse, through Tournemine, when she was

quite young; nothing frightens him. He called me an old liar, and turned me out of doors. Good! I will have a letter written to these people at the farm, where Pegriotte was sent, and inform them it was the notary who abandoned her. They know, perhaps, her family, and when she leaves Saint Lazare, it will be hot work for this scoundrel Ferrand. But some one comes—hold! it is the little pale lady who was disguised as a man at the *tapis-franc* of the Ogresse; and the same whom we robbed in the ruins near Nôtre Dame," added La Chouette, seeing Sarah appear at the other end of the alley. "Some more business to be done: it must be on account of this little lady that we carried La Goualeuse away from the farm. If she pays well for anything new, that is my affair."

On approaching La Chouette, whom she saw for the first time since the scene at the tapis-franc, the countenance of Sarah expressed disgust—that disdain which people of a certain class feel when they are obliged to come in contact with wretches whom they use as instruments or accomplices. Thomas Seyton, who, until now, had actively assisted the criminal machinations of his sister, considering them useless, had refused to continue this miserable game, consenting, nevertheless, to grant his sister, for the first and last time, an interview with La Chouette, without wishing to take part in any new schemes he might hear. Having been unable to bring Rodolphe back to her by breaking the ties which she thought dear to him, she hoped to render him the dupe of an infamous trick, the success of which might realize the dream of this opinionated, ambitious, and cruel woman. It was in agitation to pursuade Rodolphe that the daughter, whom he had supposed dead, was alive, and to substitute some orphan in the place of his daughter. Ferrand, having formally refused to enter into this plot, in spite of Sarah's threats, had resolved to make away with Fleur de Marie, as much from dread of the revelations of La Chouette, as from fear of Sarah. But she had not renounced her designs, for she was almost certain of corrupting or intimidating the notary, when shehad secured a girl capable of playing the part designed for her.

After a moment's silence, Sarah said to La Chouette, "Are you adroit, discreet, and resolute?" "Adroit as a monkey, resolute as a dog, dumb as a fish, there's La Chouette, just as the devil has made her, ready to serve you, if she is capable—and she is," answered the old woman, in a lively manner. "I hope we have fa-

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mously decoyed the young country girl, who is safely fastened up at Saint Lazare for two good months." "The question is no longer of her but of other things."

"As you wish, my little lady. As long as there is money at the end of what you are about to propose, we shall be like two fingers of a hand." Sarah could not suppress a movement of disgust. "You must know," said she, "some common people—some unfortunate family!" "There are more of them than millionaires; one can choose; there is rich misery in Paris." "You must find for me a young orphan girl, above all, one who has lost her parents very young. She must be of an agreeable face, of a sweet temper, and not more than seventeen." La Chouette looked at Sarah with astonishment. "Such an orphan cannot be difficult to find," resumed Sarah; "there are so many foundlings." "Ah! but say, now, my little lady, have you not forgotten La Goualeuse? Just what you want." "Whom do you mean by La Goualeuse?" "The young person whom we carried off from Bouqueval." "I tell you, we have nothing to do with her!" "But listen, to me, then; and, above all, reward me with good advice: you wish an orphan, gentle as a lamb, beautiful as day, and who is not seventeen?" "Without doubt." "Well, then, take La Goualeuse when she comes out of Saint Lazare; just what you want—as if made to order; for she was only six years old when that scoundrel Ferrand (about ten years ago) gave her to me, with a thousand francs, to get rid of her. It was a man named Tournemine, now in the galleys at Rochefort, who brought her to me, saying, that she was doubtless a child they wanted to get rid of, or pass for dead."

END OF VOL. II.